

Independent Study of the City Clerk's Office

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This initial chapter of the report introduces the approaches and methodologies utilized in this study and summarizes key findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in this report.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

The Matrix Consulting Group was retained by the Springfield Finance Control Board to conduct an Independent Study of the City Clerk's Office and the services provided within this Office based upon organizational structure, cost, workload, staffing, equipment, demand, frequency, performance and such other factors as deemed appropriate, to identify opportunities to reduce costs, improve productivity, and enhance effectiveness.

As outlined in the Request for Proposal, the services sought in this study include the evaluation of current service delivery functions and activities of the City Clerk's office based upon the current organizational structure, cost, workload, staffing, equipment, demand, frequency, performance and other factors as deemed appropriate and the comparison of Springfield's City Clerk's Office with other benchmark communities.

In this Study of the City Clerk's office, the Matrix Consulting Group's project team utilized a variety of data collection and analytical techniques to meet the scope of services including the following:

- The project team undertook an intensive interview process including personal interviews with every staff member in the City Clerk's Office. The interviews focused on assigned duties and responsibilities, methods employed to perform these duties, goals and objectives, management systems, the use of technology,

the levels of service provided by the Office, and the availability of resources to provide the services.

- Additionally, interviews were conducted with other key employees in the City of Springfield organization including the Chief Financial Officer, City Treasurer, Deputy City Collector, City Solicitor, and Information Technology Director. These key individuals are either directly involved in supporting services of the City Clerk's Office or are impacted by the activities of the City Clerk's Office.
- The project team collected detailed information and data from the City Clerk's Office documenting workloads, service levels, operations, costs, and methods employed.
- The project team developed a descriptive profile of the City Clerk's Office detailing the organizational structure, staffing levels, workloads, service levels, goals and objectives, and technology utilization.
- The project team compared the workload, service levels, work methodologies and processes, and technology utilization with "best management practices" employed by highly functioning City Clerk's Offices throughout the nation.
- The project team compared the organizational structure, staffing levels, duties assigned to the office, technology utilization, and service standards to other comparable City Clerk's Offices in the Commonwealth. This comparison was utilized to assist in the issues identification process as well as benchmark the performance and management practices of the Springfield City Clerk's Office to other cities.
- The final action was the analysis of the operations to include staffing levels, organization structure, and service levels in the City Clerk's Office.

The objective of this assessment was to identify opportunities for implementing operational and cost efficiencies in the department and where appropriate improved service delivery to the citizens and other departments.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project team has prepared a summary of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations to be found in this final report. Before the summary of recommendations is provided, the project team would like to note the positive aspects that characterize the operations of the City Clerk's Office.

(1) City Clerk's Office Strengths

A study such as this one by necessity focuses primarily on areas where improvement opportunities exist to improve the performance and/or cost effectiveness of the service provided by the Office. However, this process has also identified several positive areas that should be highlighted to place the entire operations of the Office in perspective.

The following points summary a few of the positive attributes of the City Clerk's Office:

- The employees in the City Clerk's Office have an overwhelmingly high level of pride in the duties they perform. This is not always observed or identified in organizations such as this one that have undergone significant financial difficulties.
- The quality of the work performed in the vitals records area is noticeably high despite the reliance on completing a significant portion of their duties using typewriters and manual processes.
- Staff is able to complete all requests for vital records received over the counter either immediately (for those records requiring photocopying) or within 1 day for vital records that must be typed from ledgers. Accomplishing this requires a concerted and concentrated effort by staff on a daily basis.
- The Clerk's Office has instituted evening hours to provide services to the public who are unable to contact City Hall during the normal daytime business hours.
- The staff of the City Clerk's Office are long-tenured, which generally results in the level of technical knowledge of their assigned functions being extremely high.

These are a few of the more significant positive features of operations and management of the City Clerk's Office, as the project team found that the City Clerk's office are accomplishing substantial workloads, with essentially no benefit of automated systems.

(2) Opportunities for Improvement

The assessment of the City Clerk's Office also identified many improvement opportunities that the Matrix Consulting Group believes should be addressed over the next year to transform the Office into one of more efficient and effective service delivery. It needs to be stressed that the project team found the Office to be functioning significantly below prevailing 'best management practice' levels for municipal clerk's offices and below the levels of many other clerk's offices in Massachusetts. These issues have been long-standing, not the result of recent financial restraints for the Office. This conclusion is strongly evident in the Clerk's Office use of technology, internal controls, customer service and management systems.

Recommended improvement areas are summarized in the following table and are grouped into the following categories:

- Management Systems;
- Administrative and Management Structure;
- Services Provided;
- Utilization of Technology; and
- Office Environment

The detailed analyses behind each of these recommendations are contained in the report.

Recommendation	Responsibility for Implementation	Timeframe for Completion	Cost Increase/(Savings)
Management Systems			
Staff Performance evaluations should be conducted annually.	City Clerk	First Quarter 2006	N/A
Key Departmental Performance Indicators should be developed.	City Clerk/Assistant City Clerk	October – December 2005	N/A

Recommendation	Responsibility for Implementation	Timeframe for Completion	Cost Increase/(Savings)
Written policies and procedures should be updated.	Assistant City Clerk	October – December 2005	N/A
The City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk should develop a Management Plan for the office addressing Service Commitments, work and staff Processes and Technology.	City Clerk/Assistant City Clerk	November 2005 – March 2006	N/A
Administrative and Management Structure			
City Clerk position should focus on planning and transformation of organization rather than as primary technical expert. Formal service delivery guidelines should be established.	City Clerk	On-going	N/A
Responsibilities of Assistant City Clerk should be expanded to include greater supervisory responsibility, employee training, implementation of new systems, and monitoring of compliance with performance standards.	City Clerk	Immediately and on going.	N/A
Position of Deputy City Clerk should be replaced with an employee assigned to the front counter.	City Clerk	January – March 2006	(\$14,000)
Position of Executive Assistant should be reclassified as Office Manager with expanded duties to include purchasing of supplies, serving as additional signatory on behalf of City Clerk, and greater supervisory authority for front office.	City Clerk	November 2005 - January 2006	\$4,000

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Recommendation	Responsibility for Implementation	Timeframe for Completion	Cost Increase/(Savings)
The positions of Vitals Clerk and Procedures Clerks should be combined into one classification (Principal Clerk).	City Clerk/Human Resources	November 2005 – January 2006	N/A
The number of Principal Clerks should be reduced by one and the number of Work Reception Clerks Increased by one.	City Clerk/Human Resources	January 2006.	(\$5,000)
Formal employee cross-training should occur in the classification of Work Reception Clerk and Principal Clerk.	Assistant City Clerk	January – March 2006	N/A
The responsibility for overseeing the Board of License Commissioners should be transferred to the Deputy City Collector.	City Clerk/Deputy Collector.	January 2006	N/A
Services Provided			
Action minutes should be produced and distributed for all City Council and Council subcommittee meetings.	City Clerk/Council Office (Senior Administrative Aide)	January 2006	N/A
City Ordinance Violation entry should be decentralized and payments made in City Collector's Office.	Various Departments/City Collector	January 2006 – April 2006	N/A
The City Clerk should utilize a national codification service for recodification and maintenance of City Code and Ordinances. Code should be made available on City website.	City Clerk/City Solicitor/Website Designer	June 2006 – September 2006	\$15,000 initial codification cost (\$5,000 annual maintenance)
All contracts filed with the City Clerk's Office should be scanned before filing and indexed.	Assistant City Clerk	January 2006.	Costs included with Agenda/Records Management Costs. Existing scanner sufficient for preliminary efforts.

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Recommendation	Responsibility for Implementation	Timeframe for Completion	Cost Increase/(Savings)
Records received from local Veterinarian's and from the local census should be utilized to increase animal registrations.	Assistant City Clerk	January 2006 – March 2006.	N/A
Technology Utilization			
Three additional PCs should be acquired for the City Clerk's Office for use by Principal Clerks.	Information Systems	January 2006.	\$4,500
All permits issued by the City Clerk's Office should be handled through new permitting system being purchased.	City Clerk/Assistant City Clerk	July – September 2006	N/A
The City Clerk should acquire an automated software package to handle City Council agendas, minutes, and document archiving and indexing.	City Clerk	April – July 2006	\$35,000 - \$40,000
Existing computer system developed in-house for vital records should be tested, refined, and utilized for all older vital records (those not on Mass Laser or produced through photocopying).	Assistant City Clerk/Information Technology	November – January 2005	N/A (program already developed. May require some programming time by staff to refine and modify for full functionality).
Detailed information and commonly utilized forms should be available on the City Clerk's website for public access.	City Clerk/Website Designer	January – March 2006.	\$1,000 for software program to develop forms.
The City Treasurer should require all cash deposits be made with his office rather than directly to a financial institution.	City Treasurer	November 2005.	N/A
The City Clerk should acquire cash registers for use in handling payments and issuing receipts.	City Clerk	January – April 2006.	Equipment costs \$3,000 (for two).

Recommendation	Responsibility for Implementation	Timeframe for Completion	Cost Increase/(Savings)
Work Environment			
The City Clerk should develop a plan for upgrading the office environment including desk and storage units for main office.	City Clerk	July 2006 – December 2006.	\$25,000
Storage space in basement safe needs to be reorganized, cleaned and documents stored on ground need to be reboxed.	City Clerk	Immediately	N/A
Office Hours for the City Clerk's Office should be expanded. Evening Hours should be monitored for effectiveness.	City Clerk	Immediately	N/A

The timeframe for implementation of the recommendations outlined above are designed to occur a logical and achievable order. This order is summarized below based upon when the effort should begin.

Time Frame:	Function Addressed:	Specific Action Needed:
Present to end 2005	Management Systems	Develop Key Performance Indicators; Develop Management Plan for Office; Update Policies & Procedures; All funds received deposited with City Treasurer on a daily basis;
	Admin/Mgmt Structure	Expand role of Assistant City Clerk; Reclassify position of Executive Assistant Combine positions of Vitals Clerk and Procedures Clerk
	Technology	Existing mainframe application for vital records should be tested, and utilized. Development of RFP for software package for Council Agenda and minute preparation and document archiving;
	Other	Storage area clean-up and organization; Expansion of office hours to increase service levels.

Time Frame:	Function Addressed:	Specific Action Needed:
First Quarter 2006	Management Systems	Develop staff evaluations
	Admin/Mgmt Structure	<p>Replace position of Dep. City Clerk with Work Reception Clerk;</p> <p>Reallocate one Principal Clerk position to Work Reception Clerk position;</p> <p>Employees should begin cross-training using updated policies and procedures manual;</p> <p>Board of License Commission transferred to Deputy Collector oversight;</p>
	Services Provided	<p>Begin production and distribution of minutes for all City Council meetings and subcommittee meetings;</p> <p>Ordinance violation entry should be handled by departments issuing violation notices and all payments made should occur with the Deputy Collector;</p> <p>All City Contracts filed are scanned and indexed prior to filing;</p> <p>Recommendations on enhancing dog registrations implemented;</p>
	Technology	<p>Three additional PCs acquired for Clerk's Office;</p> <p>Training provided for all City Clerk's Staff on PC usage;</p> <p>Review RFP responses on Software package, evaluate submissions, and make selection;</p> <p>Development of commonly used forms for website;</p> <p>Implementation of cash registers for front counter;</p>
Second Quarter 2006	Services Provided	Selection of vendor and begin implementation of City Code Codification;
	Technology	Acquisition and installation of Automated Software Package for Agendas, Minutes, and Document Archiving.
	Other	Develop plan for upgrading office environment for main office;

2. DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE

This document provides a Descriptive Profile of the City Clerk's Office of the City of Springfield. The purpose of the Descriptive Profile is to document the project team's understanding of the City Clerk's Office's organization, staff allocation by function, and the principal assigned responsibilities of each staff member. Data contained in the Profile was developed based on the work conducted by the project team, including:

- Interviews with key internal staff, including Department managers, supervisors and line staff, as well as key external staff. Additional interviews are being conducted as well as follow-up interviews with staff, as needed.
- Collection of various data describing the organization and staffing, workload and service levels as well as costs. These efforts are continuing over the next few weeks of the project.
- Documentation of key practices as they relate to work planning and scheduling, policies and procedures, as well as work processes.

The Descriptive Profile does not attempt to cover all organizational and operational aspects of the City Clerk's Office but focuses on the major functional areas.

In this chapter, the structure of this Descriptive Profile is as follows:

- Background information about the City Clerk's Office.
- Organizational chart of the City Clerk's Office and key functions showing all staff positions by function and position reporting relationships.
- Summary descriptions of key roles and responsibilities of staff. The responsibility descriptions provided in the Descriptive Profile also summarize the team's understanding of the major programs and service activities to which staff throughout the City Clerk's Office are currently assigned. It should be noted that responsibility descriptions are not intended to be at the "job description" level of detail. Rather, the descriptions are intended to provide the basic nature of each unit and assigned positions including staffing levels and work schedules, program targets and service descriptions.

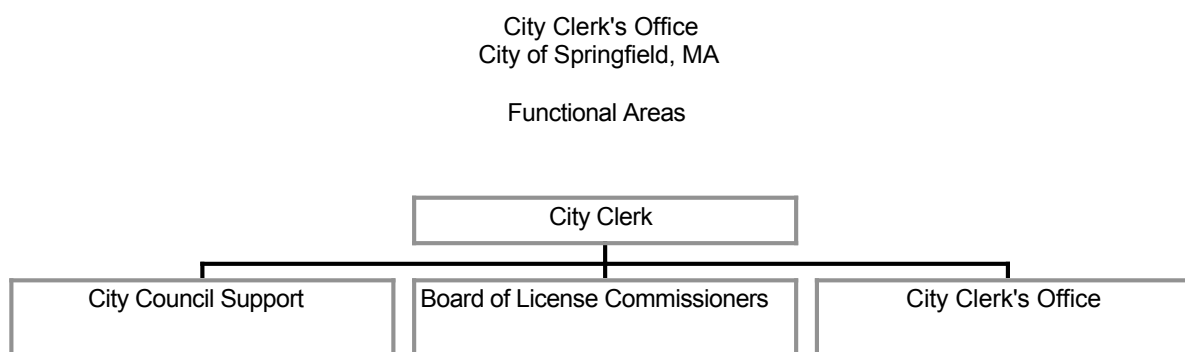
- Where necessary to better describe allocations and scheduling, additional charts are provided (e.g., scheduling, workload data, etc.)

The sections, which follow describe our current understanding of the City Clerk's Office by key function and position.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

The City Clerk of the City of Springfield is elected by the City Council to perform those duties as may be assigned by the City Council as well as those duties prescribed by law. The City Clerk's Office is responsible for City Council support, Council Meeting staffing and support, maintenance of the official city records regarding Council actions, recording and issuing all vital records, processing and issuing a variety of licenses, permits, and registrations, and staff support to the Board of License Commissioners.

The City Clerk supervises personnel in each of these areas. Overall, the Office is structured in three Divisions: Council Services, Board of License Commissioners, and City Clerk's Office as shown in the chart below.



The following tables show the total operating expenditures for each of these divisions for the current and previous two fiscal years as well as a combined budget for the entire operation.

Annual Operating Budget for the City Clerk's Office				
Expenditure	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	% of FY 2006 Budget
Council Services				
Personal Services	\$120,083	\$131,001	\$239,099	95.7%
Other Than Personal Services	\$8,224	\$10,800	\$10,800	4.3%
Subtotal Council Services	\$128,307	\$141,801	\$249,899	
Board of License Commission				
Personal Services	\$1,014	\$1,737	\$39,074	97.4%
Other Than Personal Services	\$974	\$1,062	\$1,062	2.6%
Subtotal License Comm.	\$1,988	\$2,799	\$40,136	
City Clerk's Office				
Personal Services	\$668,691	\$692,002	\$526,794	93.2%
Other Than Personal Services	\$23,627	\$38,222	\$38,222	6.8%
Subtotal City Clerk's Office	\$692,318	\$730,224	\$565,016	
All Functions				
Personal Services	\$789,788	\$824,740	\$804,967	94.1%
Other Than Personal Services	\$32,825	\$50,084	\$50,084	5.9%
Total All Functions	\$822,613	\$874,824	\$855,051	

The points, which follow, present a brief discussion of the information presented in the table.

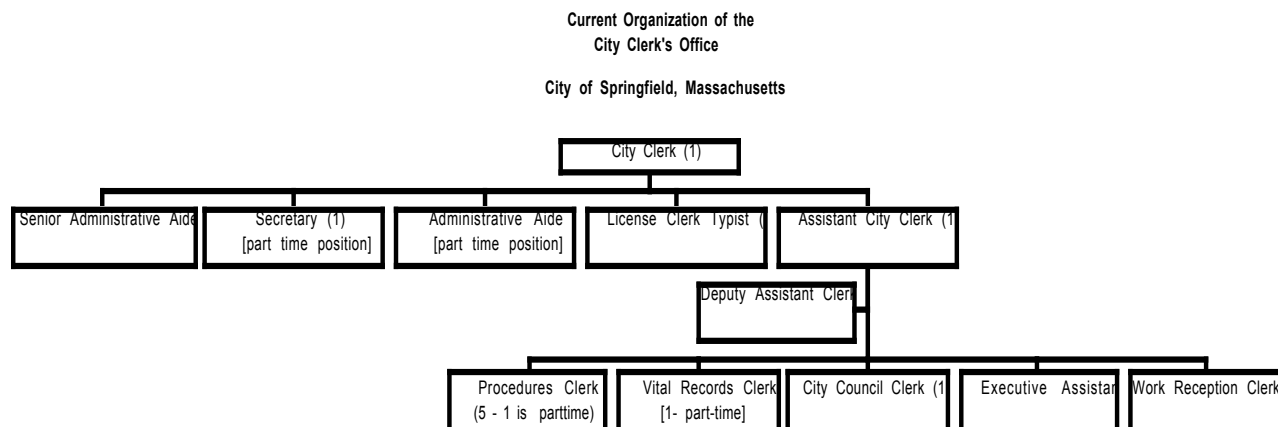
- Personal services costs (e.g., salaries and benefits) account for over 93% of the budget for each of the divisions. The overall expenditure for personal services exceeds 94% of the total current budget.
- Since fiscal year 2003 – 2004, the overall budget for these areas has increased only 3.8%. However, the change by division has varied greatly due to mainly to the reallocation of positions into different cost centers as part of budgetary program changes.
- Personal services costs have increased only 1.9% since 2004 with expenditures for other than personal services increasing by 52.3%.

The section, which follows, presents the current table of organization for the City Clerk's Office.

2. CURRENT ORGANIZATION

The City Clerk's Office is budgeted for 17 total positions (including the four positions being reallocated in the FY2006 budget). Four of these positions are part-time positions. This number has remained constant over the last three years but is a reduction from the number historically allocated to the City Clerk's functions. The number has declined over time due to the tight finances facing the City of Springfield. The FY 2004 budget showed a total of 21 authorized positions with funding provided for only seventeen positions. The positions not funded included two work reception clerks and a document technician. There are currently no vacant authorized positions.

The following organizational chart shows the current number of authorized positions in the City Clerk's Office based upon the FY06 budget and the reporting structure of the office.



The following points provide additional information regarding the organizational structure listed above.

- The positions allocated to City Council support (Senior Administrative Aide, Administrative Aide, and Secretary) all report directly to the City Clerk. These personnel are physically located on the second floor in office space adjacent to the City Council Chambers.

- The License Clerk Typist position performs duties related to and in support of the Board of License Commissioners. This position has been relocated to office space located on the third floor of City Hall. This position reports directly to the City Clerk.
- The remaining positions are all located in the main City Clerk's Office suite on the main floor of Springfield City Hall.
- The Deputy Assistant City Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the front office of the City Clerk's Office. In the absence of this individual, supervision is provided either by the City Clerk or by the Deputy Assistant City Clerk.

The following table summarizes the authorized and funded positions for the current and two previous fiscal years.

FUNDED POSITIONS:	Adopted FY 04	Adopted FY 05	Proposed FY 06
City Clerk	1	1	1
Assistant City Clerk	1	1	1
Deputy Assistant City Clerk	1	1	1
Procedures Clerk	5	5	5
Vital Records Clerk	1	1	1
Executive Assistant	1	1	1
Work Reception Clerk	2	2	2
License Clerk Typist	1	1	1
City Council Clerk	1	1	1
Senior Administrative Aide	1	1	1
Administrative Aide	1	1	1
Secretary	1	1	1
Total	17	17	17

Since fiscal year 2003 – 2004, the City Clerk's Office staffing has remained constant. While certain positions have been reallocated to different cost centers (three employees to the City Council Budget and 1 employee to the Board of Licensing Commissioners Budget), the total number of employees available to perform work has not changed. However, the reallocation of the one employee to the Board of Licensing Commissioners resulted in the physical relocation of this individual from the main floor to the third floor of City Hall reducing the number of staff in the main City Clerk's Office

suite. The budgetary change in the City Council support position had no impact on operations other than cost accounting. These three individuals were and remain physically located on the second floor.

The following section summarized the roles and responsibilities of staff assigned to the City Clerk's Office. It should be noted that the table is not intended to provide a comprehensive listing of job duties similar to a job description but rather show the general roles and responsibilities of the various positions in the City Clerk's Office.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table presents a summary of the roles and responsibilities of each classification in the City Clerk's Office. This list of responsibilities is not intended to be all-inclusive. For positions with more than one incumbent, job duties are combined into one description. Not all duties listed are necessarily performed by all individuals in the classification on a routine basis.

Unit / Position	No. of Positions	Responsibilities
City Clerk	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directs, supervises and coordinates the activities of the City Clerk's Office, Council Support Office, and the Board of License Commissioners.• Responsible for recording of all vital records, legal records, and official City Council records including corrections to these records upon presentation of appropriate documentation.• Issues various licenses and permits.• Prepares and distributes agenda for meetings of the City Council, attends meetings, records roll call votes, and maintains meeting minutes.• Indexes, reproduces, and distributes as needed certified copies of City Council actions.• Maintains custody of all official records, ordinances, and documents of the City Council and City of Springfield.

Unit / Position	No. of Positions	Responsibilities
Council Support		
Senior Administrative Aide	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as lead worker in the Council Support Office. • Assists City Council members in performing duties of their office by scheduling meetings, arranging press conferences, conducting research on City Issues/Policies. • Handles constituent calls regarding requests for information, complaints, requests for service, etc. • Direct service issues received by Council Office to appropriate City Department for action/resolution. Follows up on status of completion. Involves Councilors as needed. • Attends community meetings on behalf of Councilors as requested. • Schedules Council Subcommittee Meetings as needed. Provides staff support at meetings including taking notes of meetings and developing minutes as required. • Prepares draft reports for Committee Meetings. • Writes Proclamations and Resolutions for Councilors. • Drafts letters for Councilor signature. • Attend regular and hearing City Council Meetings to assist City Council members.
Administrative Aide	1.0 (30 hours/week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same duties as Senior Administrative Aide with the exception of serving as Lead Worker.
Secretary	1.0 (22.5 hrs/week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essentially same duties as Aides with the exception of serving as Lead Worker. • Typically does not handle Committee Meetings but does as needed when aides cannot.
Board of License Commissioners		
License Clerk	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Board of License Commissioners as Secretary of the Board. • Processes applications from the public for various licenses/permits including all levels of liquor licenses, video game licenses, common victualer's, and innkeeper/lodging houses. • Coordinates review of applications as required by other City Departments. • Schedules, advertises, prepares agenda, staffs, and prepares minutes for all meetings of the Commission. • Typically staffs 1 - 2 Commission meetings per month. • Prepares all licenses for issuance after approval by the Board. • Coordinates and serves as staff on hearings related to violation of liquor license conditions.

Unit / Position	No. of Positions	Responsibilities
City Clerk's Office		
Assistant City Clerk	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Supervisor for Front Office of City Clerk's Office including approving payroll, vacation requests, attendance, etc. • Acts on behalf of City Clerk in his absence. • Assists in handling difficult or unique service requests received in the office. • Responsible for training all office personnel on job duties. • Assists in handling work at times of high work volume. • Assists in development of departmental budget.
Deputy Assistant City Clerk	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with supervision of City Clerk's Office in absence of City Clerk or Assistant City Clerk. • Acts for the City Clerk during his absence. • Responsible for purchasing office supplies, equipment, etc. • Handles printing/copying of most forms/documents/applications utilized in the office. • As needed, assists customers at the counter with affidavits, and swearing in individuals for Oaths of Office and Goods & Commodities. • Prints ordinance supplements. • Principal individual responsible for pulling documents from archives stored in vaults. • Oversees departmental activities regarding compliance with State Records Retention Law.
Executive Assistant	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts on behalf of Assistant City Clerk in her absence. • Serves as lead worker in City Clerk's Office responsible for planning, assigning, and reviewing work of other clerical workers. • Performs the reconciliation of all monies received in the Clerk's Office on a daily basis against work performed by each employee. • Deposits funds with Treasurer's Office and/or Financial Institutions. • Balances three bank accounts on a monthly basis and provides report to City Treasurer. • Oversees opening/closing of front office daily including the preparation of cash drawers. • Responsible for processing of City Ordinance Violations (Code Enforcement, Zoning, DPW, Police, Park Dept., and Animal Control). Enters all ordinance violations into computer system (with the exception of Code Enforcement) and enters/processes all payments. • Handles Physician Registrations. • Records Mobile Homes per Homestead Act. • Serves as back-up support for Front Counter duties as needed based upon workload/staffing.

Unit / Position	No. of Positions	Responsibilities
Vital Records Clerk	1.0 (22.5 hrs/week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handles affidavits related to the correction of all vital records (birth, death, marriage). • Processes all paternity orders of the court directing addition, removal, or change of father on birth records. • Processes all adoption decrees from the court. Makes necessary corrections to the birth records. • Handles delayed returns that are older than 1 year. • Assists with typing of birth certificates. • Assists with answering incoming phone calls.
Procedures Clerk	5.0 (1 is part-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with preparation/completion of birth, death, and marriage orders. • Handles processing of paperwork related to registration of business names (d/b/a) and any changes, additions, or deletions to partners. • Processes marriage intentions filed by public. Prepares marriage license and records information in ledgers and index. Original documents sent to State every month regarding licenses issued. • Processes affidavits related to changes on marriage licenses. • Process marriage and death certificate requests on a daily basis. • Record all birth records provided to the City Clerk by Hospitals. Verify information is accurate. Copies sent to other jurisdictions as appropriate. Originals filed with the State. • Handle changes in records due to paternity issues. • Record all death certificates received from Health Department. Verify all necessary information is included. If any errors or omissions, return to Health Department for correction. • Handles requests for birth certificates received in the mail. • Processes various licenses and permits including Raffle and Bazaar, Charitable Vendors, Transient Vendors, and Soliciting Funds. • Files all paperwork related to Board of Appeals, claims against the City, and Contracts entered into by the City. • Processes dog licenses. • Processes Goods & Commodities certificates. • Assists with mail sorting and distribution. • Assist at front counter and with phone answering duties.

Unit / Position	No. of Positions	Responsibilities
Work Reception Clerk	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal position responsible for staffing front count and receiving and processing public requests for assistance/records. • Request for assistance cover all functions performed by the Office including birth records, marriage intentions and licenses, marriage records, death certificates, business certification, tax sales, dog licenses, and hunting and fishing licenses. • Primary position responsible for answering phones. • Processes payments for all services provided. • Assist other positions in the copying of information. • Type birth, death, and marriage records to complete orders received. • File records used to prepare birth, death, or marriage orders.
City Council Clerk	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares agenda for City Council meetings including regular meetings and hearing meetings. • Prepares index of items sent to Council for action and the disposition of each item. • Distributes agenda packets to Council Members and City Staff. Mails agendas to approximately 80 interested parties. • Agenda posted on Bulletin Board. • Processes applications for hearings in advance of Council Hearing Meeting. Sends letters to all individuals within 100 feet of property making request. • Performs billing for costs associated with special hearings. • Maintains City Ordinance Book including supplements following council approval of ordinances. • Processes all petitions related to right of way, public ways, sidewalks and sewers. • Processes all petroleum storage applications including preparing bill and certificate of registration. • Prepares True Copies of all orders approved. • Mails orders passed by Council to appropriate individuals including State Legislators. • Responsible for preparing Control Board minutes. • Serves as Secretary to City Clerk for correspondence. • Conducts research on City Council proceedings and actions. • Processes items referred to City Council Committees. • Maintains Master Appointment Listing for Commissions/Committees. Ensures vacancy exists prior to appointment of new individual. Ensures individuals appointed meet any necessary eligibility criteria. • Handles open air parking licenses. • Serves as backup to Front Counter as needed.

The section, below, provides a summary review of selected data collected by the project team.

4. SUMMARY WORKLOAD AND SERVICE LEVELS

The table, which follows, presents an overview and sampling of the data collected during the initial stages of this project.

Characteristic	Description
Hours of Operation and Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work hours are from 8:15 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday; with extended hours until 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Office is open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Training and Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City Clerk's Office does not have a formal ongoing training program for staff. Training is provided on-the-job and as applicable statutes or ordinances are changed that impact their work processes.• No specific certification or advanced education is required for any of the positions in the City Clerk's Office.

Characteristic	Description																																																						
Workload and Service Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little data is readily available that outlines the workload associated with various activities within the department. While the data may be available in records, due to the level of computerization it would require hand calculation and compilation. Copies of available annual reports and numbers of permits, licenses, etc. issued have been collected and will be further analyzed later in the study. The Board of License Commissioners annual report for 2004 indicated the following activity levels: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th><th>Number</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Common Victualler – All Alcoholic</td><td>136</td></tr> <tr> <td>Common Victualler – Wine & Malt</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr> <td>Victualler – Wine & Malt Seasonal</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Package – All Alcohol</td><td>32</td></tr> <tr> <td>Package – Wine & Malt</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr> <td>Club – All Alcohol</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr> <td>Innholder – All Alcohol</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td>Common Victualler with Alcohol</td><td>162</td></tr> <tr> <td>Video Game Licenses</td><td>1450</td></tr> </tbody> </table> The City Clerk's Annual Report for FY 2004 shows: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item</th><th>Number</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Certified Copies</td><td>34,784</td></tr> <tr> <td>Verifications</td><td>2,698</td></tr> <tr> <td>Affidavits</td><td>313</td></tr> <tr> <td>Marriage Intentions</td><td>1,012</td></tr> <tr> <td>Search of Records</td><td>87</td></tr> <tr> <td>Physician Registration</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Raffles</td><td>32</td></tr> <tr> <td>Casino</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr> <td>Charitable Organization</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Business Certificates</td><td>667</td></tr> <tr> <td>Bus. Certificates Changes</td><td>62</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tag Sale Permits</td><td>1,816</td></tr> <tr> <td>Transient Vendor</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr> <td>Statements</td><td>503</td></tr> <tr> <td>Dog Licenses</td><td>1,138</td></tr> <tr> <td>Fish and Game Licenses</td><td>484</td></tr> </tbody> </table> The major area where data availability is lacking relates to the areas of ordinance tickets processed and ordinance payments processed. 	Type	Number	Common Victualler – All Alcoholic	136	Common Victualler – Wine & Malt	13	Victualler – Wine & Malt Seasonal	2	Package – All Alcohol	32	Package – Wine & Malt	13	Club – All Alcohol	15	Innholder – All Alcohol	5	Common Victualler with Alcohol	162	Video Game Licenses	1450	Item	Number	Certified Copies	34,784	Verifications	2,698	Affidavits	313	Marriage Intentions	1,012	Search of Records	87	Physician Registration	1	Raffles	32	Casino	4	Charitable Organization	2	Business Certificates	667	Bus. Certificates Changes	62	Tag Sale Permits	1,816	Transient Vendor	12	Statements	503	Dog Licenses	1,138	Fish and Game Licenses	484
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Characteristic	Description
Performance Goals and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Clerks Office generally issues all birth certificates contained on the State computer system immediately upon request by a customer.• For birth and death records that must be typed, orders are taken and the records are prepared for distribution the following day after 3:00 p.m.• The front counter service is given priority over routine or other assigned duties and addition staff are moved to assist on the front counter as needed based upon service demand.

3. COMPARATIVE SURVEY

As part of the review of the City Clerk's Office functions, the Matrix Consulting Group undertook a comparative survey with communities comparable to Springfield to analyze staffing, workloads, services provided, computerization, and other service delivery measures. It is important to note that each community has unique aspects that are difficult to take into consideration when comparing isolated factors of the operation. However, this type of comparison is useful for determining general trends and practices in City Clerk's Operations.

The complete survey results are contained as Attachment A at the end of this report. The following communities were personally contacted and invited to participate in the survey:

Municipality	Population
Bridgeport, CT	139,529
Brockton, MA	94,304
Cambridge, MA	101,355
Hartford, CT	121,578
Lowell, MA	105,167
Lynn, MA	89,050
Manchester, NH	107,006
New Bedford, MA	93,768
New Haven, CT	123,626
Newton, MA	83,829
Providence, RI	173,618
Quincy, MA	88,025
Somerville, MA	77,478
Worcester, MA	172,648

Responses to the survey document were received from the following Massachusetts communities: Cambridge, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Quincy and Worcester. In some cases, the communities provided only partial information.

The following sections present some preliminary findings and comparisons between the City of Springfield and the surveyed comparables in the areas of staffing levels, duties performed, work hours, and utilization of technology.

1. STAFFING LEVELS

In making comparisons between staffing levels in various communities, it is necessary to take into account the duties and responsibilities assigned to the various staff members. The following table outlines the total staff which report to the City Clerk, the number assigned to basic City Clerk functions (excluding Council support, elections, etc.), and compares the number of citizens per employee. In making comparisons between communities based upon the number of citizens per employee, it is important to note that this is simply a broad indicator of service need and enables, to some extent, the difference in population to be accounted for. However, it is not a stand-alone indicator for making determinations regarding staffing levels.

	Springfield	Worcester	Cambridge	Lowell	Lynn	New Bedford	Quincy	Average
Population	152,082	172,648	101,355	105,167	89,050	93,768	88,025	108,336
Total number of Staff:	17	13	10	8	7	11	10	9.8
City Clerk Staff:	13	12	10	7	5	7	6	7.8
Council Office Staff:	3	1	0	1	0	2	0	0.7
Other Staff:	1	0	0	0	2	2	4	1.3
Mgmt/Supervisory Positions:	2	3	4	3	2	4	2	
Non-management Positions:	15	10	6	5	5	7	8	
Part-time employees?	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	2	
Temporary Employees:	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	
How many employees assigned to assist at front counter?	12	10	6	8	7	9	6	7.7
Citizens per Employee	8,946	13,281	10,136	13,146	12,721	8,524	8,803	11,102
Citizens per Clerk Employee	11,699	14,387	10,136	15,024	17,810	13,395	14,671	14,237
Citizens per Counter Employee	12,674	17,265	16,893	13,146	12,721	10,419	14,671	14,131

The following comments are based upon the data contained in the table:

- The number of staff in the City Clerk's Offices surveyed ranged from a low of 7 (Lynn) to a high of 17 (Springfield). The average number of staff was 9.8.
- The number of staff assigned to providing general public services or "counter function" (including vital records, permits, licenses, registrations, etc. and excluding City Council support) ranged from a low of 5 (Lynn) to a high of 12 (Springfield). The average number of staff assigned to these functions was 7.8.
- None of the comparable communities utilize part-time employees, with the exception of Springfield (two in the Council Office and one in Clerk's Office) and Quincy (two in Clerk's Office – vitals and voter registrar). None of the surveyed comparable communities utilized temporary employees – other than an occasional intern or periodic summer help.
- The number of citizens per City Clerk's Employee varied from a high of 17,810 in Lynn, MA to a low of 10,136 in Cambridge. The average for the comparable communities was 14,237. Each staff member in the Springfield City Clerk's Office supports 11,699 citizens or 17% less than the survey average. The City of Springfield's Clerk Office is serving 2,538 fewer citizens per employee than the average of the comparable communities.
- Similar results are found if only those employees assigned to assist (even on a part-time basis) on the front counter are compared to the municipality's population. Citizens per front counter employee ranged from a low of 10,419 in New Bedford to a high of 17,265 in Worcester with an average for all comparable communities of 14,131. The number for Springfield is 12,674 citizens or 10% below the survey average. The Springfield City Clerk's employees assigned to assist on front counter duties are serving 1,457 fewer employees than the average of the comparables.

The survey also addressed staff roles and functions performed out of the Clerk's Offices, as described in the next section.

2. DUTIES PERFORMED

The survey looked at the major duties assigned to City Clerk's Offices in Massachusetts. These duties were in four primary areas: City Council Support; Permits, Licenses, and Certificates (including Vital Records); Ordinance Violation Payments; and Citizen Services. The following table summarizes the responses:

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
Independent Study of the City Clerk's Office

	Springfield	Worcester	Cambridge	Lowell	Lynn	New Bedford	Quincy
City Council Support:							
Agenda Preparation/ Distribution	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff Support to Council Committees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Council Mtg Attendance/ Support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (Council Office)	Yes
Preparation/ distribution of meeting minutes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Permits/ Licensing:							
Marriage Intentions/ Licenses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Death Certificates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physician Registration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Petroleum Licensing/Fuel Storage	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dog Licenses	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liquor Licenses	Yes (License Commission)	No	No	No - Liquor Commission	Yes	No (licensing Board)	Yes
Tag Sales	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Transient Vendor Permits	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Business Certificates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Open Air Parking	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

	Springfield	Worcester	Cambridge	Lowell	Lynn	New Bedford	Quincy
Ordinance Violation Payments:							
Code Enforcement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Parking Violations	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Park District Violations	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Public Works/Waste Collection Violations	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Health & Human Services	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Animal Control	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Citizen Services:							
Ordinance Research/Copies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vital Records research/copies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
City Information Referral to other Departments	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The following points outline the major findings of this review:

- All communities, including Springfield, have the responsibility for providing Citizen Services including performing Ordinance Research, Vital Records Research and Copies of records. Additionally, all Offices performed to some degree as a City Information Referral source for the public to access the appropriate City Department.
- All participating communities indicated some level of responsibility for the maintenance and issuance of various permits, licenses, and certificates. Areas most generally assigned to the Clerk's Office include: Marriage Intentions and Licenses, Death Certificates, Birth Certificates, Physician Registration, Petroleum or Fuel Storage Licensing, Dog Licensing, and Business Certificates.
- The functional area where the greatest variation exists between the surveyed City Clerk's Offices related to Ordinance Violation Processing and Payments. While the Springfield City Clerk's Office is responsible for a large number of ordinance violations (entering violations and processing associated payments),

none of the other communities were responsible for the same number of ordinance violations. Four of the six communities have responsibility for handling Animal Control Violations and three of the six were responsible for Code Enforcement Violations and Public Works/Waste Collection Violations. The other ordinance violations (Parking, Park District, and Health and Human Services) were each only provided by one other Clerk's Office.

In addition to looking at whether general support was provided to the City Council, the survey asked several specific questions related to the type of minutes produces, responsibility for producing them, and time requirements for producing the minutes. These results are presented in the following table:

	Springfield	Worcester	Cambridge	Lowell	Lynn	New Bedford	Quincy
Number of City Council Meetings per Month	3/month (2 regular meetings and 1 meeting for zoning and permits	Weekly meetings	Every Monday, from Labor Day through last Monday in June (one summer meeting)	Weekly except June through Sept. (2/month)	2/month except 1/month during June, July, August	2/month	2/month
Number of other Meeting/ Month Supported by Clerk's Staff	8 to 10	9/month	8 to 10	8/month	Same	4-5/month	8, City License Board (3) & comm. (5)
Type of City Council Minutes Prepared	No minutes prepared	Detailed action.	Detailed action minutes	Detailed action minutes		Action minutes with a little detail	Detailed
Who prepares Minutes?	City Clerk - records votes and action taken; Council Office - for Subcommittee Meetings	Assistant City Clerk	Ops. Mgr. and Admin. Asst. from notes taken by Clerk and Deputy Clerk. Reviewed and approved by CC and DCC.	City Clerk/ Asst. City Clerk for Council; Clerk of Comm. for Subcomm. meetings	Council Office.	Asst. Clerk or Secy. of Council; Clerk of Committee for subcomm.	Assistant City Clerk

The following point summarize the findings regarding City Council support in the area of meeting support and minute preparation:

- The various City Clerk's Offices surveyed are required to staff and support regular City Council meetings that varied from weekly to twice per month meetings. The staff of the City of Springfield's Clerk's Office supports three regular Council Meetings monthly which is, on average, in line with the comparables.
- The number of other meetings supported varied greatly from 2 to 10 per month. The variation is greatest depending upon whether the Licensing Control Board and the Council Office Staff report to the City Clerk or are separate functions. Overall, the level of meetings supported by the Springfield City Clerk (including the License Commission and the Council Office) is not inconsistent with comparable communities.
- The major difference in this functional area between the City of Springfield City Clerk's Office and the comparable communities is in the area of minute preparation. The City of Springfield maintains a record of the Council action on each item before the City Council but no minutes are produced, approved by the City Council or distributed. All other communities that responded on this question are producing at least action minutes that document the action taken by the City Council. The City of Springfield records the action taken on each item before the City Council and all votes are logged in a ledger. While the current practice meets the minimum requirements of State Statute, it does not provide easy or widespread notice to the public regarding action taken by the City Council. The only way to determine specific action on individual items is to contact the City Clerk's Office and have each item looked up. No meeting summary is available.

The next section summarizes input received from comparative communities regarding the services provided to the public.

3. OFFICE HOURS AND HOURS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

The following table compares the Springfield City Clerk's Office to the comparable communities in the areas of hours worked by staff, hours the City Clerk's Office is open to the public, and the availability of evening hours for the public.

	Springfield	Worcester	Cambridge	Lowell	Lynn	New Bedford	Quincy
Office Hours	8:15 - 4:30 M-F; 8:15 - 6 Th.	8:30 - 5 M-F	8:30 to 8 Mondays; 8:30 to 5 T,W,Th; 8:30 to Noon Friday	8 to 5 M-F	8:30 - 4 M,W,Th, 8:30 - 8 Tuesday, 8:30 - 12:30 Friday	8:00 - 4:00 M-F	8:30 - 4:30 M-F
Hours Open for Public	9:00 - 4:00 M-F; 9:00 - 6 Th.	8:45 - 4:15	same as above	same as above	same as above	same as above	same as above
Extended Office Hours	Thursday until 6:00 p.m.	None	Monday until 8:00 p.m.	None	Tuesday until 8:00 p.m.	None	None
Total Hrs Available to Public	37	37.5	40.5	45	38	40	40

The following comments are based upon the data contained in the table above:

- All except one community have their City Clerk's Offices open to the public the same hours that the office is staffed. On average, these comparable communities are available to provide services to the public 40.1 hours per week. The City of Springfield's City Clerk's Office is available for public service for 37 hours per week.
- Springfield maintains evening service hours for the public on Thursday until 6:00 p.m. Only two of the six comparable communities utilize evening hours to provide services to the public. Several of the communities noted that evening hours have been utilized in the past but the demand for service did not exist to warrant the staff time. Springfield City Clerk staff believes that the evening hours are serving a need for citizens who are unable to utilize services during the normal business day. However, data is not tracked that would enable decisions to be made regarding whether the level of service warrants the extended hours.

The next section summarizes the results of the survey regarding the technology in use in other clerk's offices.

4. TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET UTILIZATION

The comparable survey asked each Clerk's Office about the technology utilized by their office so that comparisons and opportunities for Springfield could be assessed.

The following table summarizes the technology utilized and the extent it is integrated into the operations for the comparable communities:

	Springfield	Worcester	Cambridge	Lowell	Lynn	New Bedford	Quincy
Systems utilized?	Mass Laser for some Vital records.	Use in-house developed database for Vitals, Dog Licenses.	Special programs prepared for all vital records, agenda preparations and internet access to Council agenda. Codemaster for Municipal Code. PeopleSoft for financial management.	Utilize program developed specifically for vitals. Enter information as form requested and print out the form for citizens. Information stored for future use. All information from 1990 to present in system. Use Worcester dog license software.	Mass Laser for some Vital Records.	Use in-house developed system. All information on birth certificates entered in system from ledgers and form prints out. Does not save in system. Since 1984 stopped making ledgers and work from original photocopy record. Certify and seal.	Munis (to be installed late 2005), Universe Database (vitals),
Services provided via the web?	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Which services?		Basic information provided regarding services. Internet based sales will begin by end of 2005. City Council calendar and minutes on-line.	Council hearing schedule, agenda and records online and searchable. Downloadable order forms for vital records and business certificate.		Applications available	Council Agendas and Minutes available online.	Contact information including email for all Clerks' Offices Functions. Downloadable forms for Dog Registrations, and license board applications. Council Agenda.
Ordinances and Codes available on line?	No	Yes	Yes	No	No but planned for City Code to be online.	No	Yes

The following points summarize the utilization of technology in the comparable communities:

- Three of the six comparables provide their City Code and/or City Ordinances on-line in an electronic format. This provides ready access to the public and other City Departments. Most communities providing City Code and Ordinance information on-line are utilizing one of the national Codification Services which not only provides updates and supplements for the City Code but provides communities the ability to place the code on line. The City of Springfield does not currently have the City Code in a format that would enable it to be placed online.
- All communities surveyed, with the exception of Lowell, are providing at least basic information regarding the services provided by the Clerk's Office on their website. Those utilizing web services typically are providing direct contract information for specific services, downloadable forms, and copies of City Council Agendas and/or minutes. The City of Cambridge has one of the most useful and highly developed websites for the searching of Council Actions. The City of Springfield website page for the City Clerk's Office provides only the most basic information regarding the services provided by the Office.
- The use of technology in handling the vital records function (the largest single workload in the City Clerk's Office) varies greatly from community to community. Worcester, MA is clearly one of the leading communities in the State in the computerization of City Clerk's functions and has developed their systems entirely in-house through their I.T. Departments. Most other Clerk's Offices that have implemented computerization of their Vital Records have also turned to in-house developed system to meet their needs. Lynn, MA and Springfield are utilizing the Mass Laser system provided by the State for more recent vital records.

This survey showed many points of departure in the service and capabilities among comparison communities with identification of potential areas of improvement for the City of Springfield. However, it also showed that the clerk's offices in many communities in the Commonwealth have developed approaches to implementing technology, providing high levels of customer service and strong internal management which are not found in Springfield.

4. DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

The Matrix Consulting Group conducted a detailed review of the current practices of the City Clerk's Office against "best practices" that exist in City Clerk's Offices and municipal operations throughout the Country. The best practices utilized for the review of the Springfield City Clerk's office were based upon the duties currently performed by the Office. Whether this function is located appropriately within the City Clerk's Office is addressed in the analysis section.

The measures utilized have been derived from the project team's collective experience and represent the following ways to identify departmental strengths as well as improvement opportunities:

- Statements of "effective practices" based on the study team's experience in evaluating operations in other agencies or "industry standards" from other research organizations.
- Identification of whether and how the Clerk's Office meets the performance targets.
- A brief description of potential alternatives to current practice.

The purpose of the diagnostic assessment was to develop an overall assessment of the Clerk's Office. Detailed analysis of the issues identified here was conducted following the completion of the Diagnostic Assessment and lead to the development of the final report. It should be noted that every function is not covered in this report.

The following table highlights our assessment of some of the current strengths and improvement opportunities that exist in the City Clerk's Office.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
1. Administration, Management and Organization		
The City Clerks Office formally plans and schedules work relating to recurring workloads.	During peak work periods, all staff are utilized to provide services to meet needs.	No formal work plan exists within the Clerk's Office to manage workloads, improve work methods or technology, or address process deficiencies. Lack of computerized tracking of work activities makes data needed to plan and evaluate difficult to compile.
The City Clerk's Office utilizes a performance based budgeting process.	The City of Springfield has recently implemented a budget containing performance based work measures. The City Clerks Office is participating in this process.	The performance measures utilized for the City Clerk's Office need to be further developed to focus more on results of efforts that are meaningful and representative of the Office.
The City Clerk and staff keep current with legislative changes that affect their Department.	All staff are knowledgeable about current rules and regulations regarding their assigned areas.	No training program is in place to ensure all staff are aware of legal changes affecting the City Clerk's Operations. Staff does not typically attend professional association meetings or training seminars.
Salaries are competitive given the local market and skills required.	Salaries for City Clerk's positions are in line with those for other City positions given duties and responsibilities assigned.	n/a
Employees in the Department are cross-trained.	Some limited cross training has occurred. Employees assigned to "backroom" for Agenda and Permits are trained to assist in vitals and on front counter.	Expanded cross training is needed to ensure that each position has multiple back-up support and that all duties can be performed in the absence of specific staff. One specific area where lack of sufficient cross training has created problems is in the area of ordinance violation payments and some permitting activities.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
There is adequate separation of duties to ensure that proper oversight/internal controls are present in the Office.	Key functional areas have a segregation of duties that ensures proper oversight and internal controls. Cash handling is reconciled to work activities by the Executive Assistant on a daily basis. Changes to vital records based upon affidavits is assigned to one individual ensuring consistency.	Increase utilization of technology in the handling of cash would improve internal controls in this area. Duties of Procedures Clerks are highly segmented based upon function (birth, death, marriage, etc.) and may be too narrow to allow all duties to be performed as timely as desired.
A secure environment is provided for the protection of essential records on site.	All critical records are stored in safes located throughout City Hall. Safes are locked with limited access.	Records storage in vault in basement is in less than suitable condition. In general, the area is in disarray with large numbers of boxes stored on floor with many broken causing contents to fall onto floor. This area was recently updated to include a new fire alarm system and workers assigned to perform these duties may be responsible for much of this disarray. Floor littered with papers, cigarette butts, and trash. Safe on third floor recently acquired for Clerk's use but needs shelving before being put into use. All records are stored on site.
The City Clerk has adopted a formal records retention policy and all staff are trained on the procedures/guidelines.	All offices are aware of and have copies of state records retention procedures. Deputy City Clerk is responsible for annual records review.	Annual training on records retention should occur to ensure all individuals are knowledgeable of regulations.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
2. Work Processes and Workload		
The City Clerk's Office utilizes computer systems to document work loads, vendors, permits, etc.	n/a	Computer usage is limited to a handful of PCs (mainly for agenda preparation and printing of some permits). Mainframe system utilized for ordinance violation payments. No system utilized for cash management or payment tracking. In-house system developed for vital records not on state system but has not been properly utilized nor has staff been adequately trained to utilize. All tracking and indexing functions are handled via paper and ledgers. Council agendas, votes taken, and minutes (to extent produced) are not done with a system that enables electronic access or distribution.
All requests for marriage and/or death licenses are issued within one week of receipt of the request.	Requests made in person at counter are either processed immediately (for newer records where document is copies and sealed) or for next day pickup (for those needing to be typed). Mail requests are routinely running two to four weeks behind with the exception of requests sent via FedEx, which are processed when received.	Changes in processing methods would enable greater percentage of requests to be handled immediately (eliminating the need to deal with an individual twice). Mail requests need to be addressed in same time frame as other requests – current timeframe generally approaches several weeks.
The Clerk's Office records marriages and deaths within one week of receipt of all completed documents.	Standard for recording marriages and deaths is generally met by the Clerk's Staff.	Performance standards should be set at 95% of all marriage and death certificates received are processed within one week.
City Council agenda packets are prepared and distributed within the prescribed time frame.	City Clerk staff meets weekly deadlines for preparing and distributing agenda packets.	Increased computerization of process would enable documents to be distributed electronically and posted to website for public access.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
All documents received by the Clerk's Office, which require filing, are processed within one week.	Most documents related to vitals are processed in a timely manner.	Filing of contracts has not been a priority for staff who estimated that these documents are a year behind schedule. No master index is prepared nor are they available in electronic format.
All legal actions of the City (i.e., ordinances, resolutions, agreements, etc.) are indexed electronically. Access to the index is provided to staff and the public via internet access.	n/a	No formal electronic index is utilized to handle City ordinances, resolutions, or agreements. Word file is maintained that contains listing of changes and original documents are filed by date of meeting.
An annual review of records is conducted which involves the inventory, retention and destruction of records according to statutory requirements and the adopted records retention policy.	Records are generally reviewed annually for compliance with the statutory records retention policy.	The development of a local records retention policy identifying responsible individuals, when it will occur, and how designated records will be destroyed would enhance these efforts.
Records are routinely scanned / microfiched prior to destruction.	n/a	Equipment currently exists to conduct some limited scanning of documents; however, this is not currently being completed. An upgrade of the system would be necessary to handle a complete and systematic scanning of documents.
Minutes are prepared and distributed within one week of Council Meeting.	n/a	Currently, no minutes are produced of Council meetings or Subcommittee meetings. Formal action and votes are logged in ledger system. Meeting minutes should be prepared in action format within one week of Meeting.
Action update noting final Council action taken on agenda items is developed and distributed within one week of Council Meeting.	n/a	Handwritten notes available next day following meeting but no formal document prepared for distribution. Individuals contact City Clerk for questions about specific action taken.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
Computerized index of staff reports to City Council is maintained.	n/a	No computerized index is maintained of items provided to the City Council.
The City Clerk's Office has a program in place to verify that all applicable individuals needing to register or be licensed by their office are in compliance. Examples include physician registration, dog licenses, petroleum storage, etc.	n/a	No system is currently in place to verify compliance with requirements. Records are received that would enable staff to verify that all dog are licensed (these include rabies vaccination records from Vets, and information from City Census).
An automated business license information system is utilized to monitor and track collection.	n/a	Permitting is not handled with a computerized system. All permits are tracked, issued, and prepared using Word, index cards, and/or typewriters. In response to a previous audit of the Public Works Dept., an RFP has been issued for a comprehensive permitting system that will be utilized Citywide. City Clerk's staff should be trained and provided access to this system when installed and required to utilize for all permits issued by their office. This will not only streamline work processes but also provide historical information on previous permit holders useful for auditing current compliance.
Systems and processes are in place to find unlicensed businesses or individuals.	n/a	Permits and licenses are handled on an "as presented" basis. No formal procedures are undertaken to determine whether compliance is being achieved with City licensing or permitting requirements.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
3. Information Technology		
Does the City Clerk's Office use computerized systems for issuance of permits and licenses?	n/a	No computerized system is maintained. Permits and licenses should be handled through new software that the City of Springfield has issued an RFP for purchase.
The City Clerk's Office maintains data security and integrity, including an audit trail of changes in records.	All changes to vital records are supported with an affidavit documenting the change and the reason for change.	
The information system utilized by the Department allows for computerized records, which document the history and current information of licenses and permitted individuals and entities.	n/a	No existing system is in place. Historical information is maintained in ledgers or on index cards. Implementation of permitting system under RFP will enable City Clerk's Office to implement computerized records for this area.
Public access to documents (Council Agendas, Adopted Ordinances/Resolutions) is provided via the internet.	n/a	No electronic access to records is available for City Staff or the public. Posting of agendas, adopted ordinances, and resolutions should occur via internet access. The first step to accomplishing this will be a change in the method utilized to prepare these documents.
The information system provides query / reporting tools to allow users to work independent of programming personnel in addressing the needs of the Department.	n/a	Since no electronic systems are currently utilized (except for ordinance violation payments and the Mass Laser system for vital records) no querying is possible. Existing ordinance payment system requires computer programming staff to run reports and queries.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
The City Code is available electronically for staff and the public and is updated at least quarterly.	City Code is currently being updated and codified in an electronic format using Word at the direction of the City Solicitor's Office with assistance and review by the City Clerk's Office.	The Clerk's Office should utilize one of the national code maintenance services that provide regular updates and codification of City Codes. This will ensure the maintenance of an up-to-date document and provide the ability to for electronic access and searching of the code.
The City Clerk's systems allows for integration with other systems whenever possible.	n/a	Since few computer systems are in place, no integration is possible at this time. Other Departments utilize the ordinance violation payment system. The planned permitting software will enable authorized departments to view information entered by other departments allowing data sharing and integration.
4. Coordination and Communication with Other Departments		
The City Clerk receives copies of all rabies shots administered by local veterinarians.	Yes. Records are received from local veterinarians.	While documents are received, no actual use is currently made off them. These should be crosschecked with dog registrations to ensure dogs are registered.
The City Clerk receives information from annual census regarding dog ownership.	Information is received.	Annual mailing of registration forms should be made to all individuals who indicate dog ownership on census forms but who do not appear as registered owners.
The City Clerk's Office works with the Legal Department to ensure that all ordinances passed by the City Council are codified accurately and in a timely manner.	Codification process is currently underway at this point through the use of an in-house system. Basic index of changes to ordinances is maintained with copies of new ordinance attached to previous ordinance.	City Clerk should utilize one of the national codification services to provide timely codification services of adopted ordinances and enable staff and citizens to access code electronically.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
Relevant data regarding business licensing and registration is shared electronically with other departments.	No current process exists to share information either electronically or manually.	Use of new permitting system will enable integration between departments.
The City Clerk provides information and advice to other departments regarding records retention issues.	City Clerk is resource to other departments regarding records retention issues.	Annual training program should be put in place for City Clerk to share expertise in handling of City records. Each department should have an identified records retention individual.
5. Cash Management		
Individuals handling money are appropriately trained on cash management practices and internal controls.		No periodic training is currently provided regarding the handling of cash or internal controls.
Segregation of duties exists where the acceptance, recording, custodial and reconciliation functions are properly divided to ensure compliance with internal controls.	In general a minimally acceptable segregation of duties is maintained.	The Executive Assistant is responsible for reconciling funds received on a daily basis. She is also responsible for assisting with serving the public at the front counter on an as needed basis. Internal controls are lacking as follows: multiple employees utilizing a cash drawer, receipts issued only upon request, no computerized software or cash register is utilized for processing payments, and individuals maintain manual logs of work activity for reconciliation with cash received.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
All cash received is processed daily with the total received reconciled to deposit activity.	Executive Assistant is currently conducting daily reconciliation. Cash is reconciled daily against work activities of each clerk. Deposits are made daily by Clerk's staff to financial institution. Monthly statement reconciliation occurs and is provided to City Treasurer's Office.	Receipts are currently issued only upon request rather than for each transaction. Cash registers or computer software would make this easier. This would enable electronic reports to be generated to track by employee the type and amount of payments received. Electronic reconciliation would also be possible on a daily basis. Additionally, data would be available electronically regarding daily workloads. Funds received via mail requests for records are often held for weeks prior to processing.
All cash received is deposited on a daily basis with either the City Treasurer/Collector or a financial institution.	Cash is currently generally deposited on a daily basis with financial institution.	The City Treasurer has implemented recent changes in cash handling so that all funds received by the City Clerk are deposited directly into the City's general accounts rather than accounts set up for the City Clerk. Policy should be established so all deposits are made directly to City Treasurer.
Physical security procedures are in place during work hours and non-working hours for all funds received and change drawers maintained.	Money received is stored overnight in the City Clerk's safe.	During the day, there are times when funds are sitting on top of desk during reconciliation. If this individual is required to assist with other duties in the office during reconciliation, funds may lay on top of desk. While the Clerk's Office is secure, individuals conducting genealogy research are seated in near proximity.

Best Management Practice	Strength	Improvement Opportunity
Automated systems are utilized where practical to provide better processing and reconciliation support as well as providing a more efficient and effective manner to manage receipts.	n/a	No automated systems for cash handling are currently in place.
6. Public Education and Customer Service		
The City Clerk's website is content driven and provides useful information regarding permitting and licensing requirements, including information needed when applications are filed.	Website currently provides only description of office and functions it performs.	Website should be modified to provide detailed information regarding permit, licensing and registration requirements. City Code and Council agenda and minutes should be available on the website.
The City Clerk's website provides the ability for citizens to download and/or fill out forms electronically. Where practical (i.e., no signature needed), forms may be submitted electronically.	n/a	No forms are currently available online. Website should include ability to download all forms for vital document requests, physician registration, permitting, and registration. Forms should be developed in a manner that allows the user to complete them electronically. Utilization of electronic credit card payments would enable some requests to be handled via electronic submission.
The City Clerk's Office periodically conducts surveys to determine how the public perceives the Department and the functions it performs.	n/a	Citizen comment cards and/or formal survey should be conducted every other year to enable the City Clerk to receive public feedback regarding performance.
Front Counter staff receives customer service training annually.	n/a	No formal training is provided to staff. Annual training program should be developed that includes customer service training on an annual basis.

The major issues that can be distilled from this comparison of the City Clerk's Office to both best management practices and the information gathered through the comparative survey are as follows:

- **Administrative and management processes and oversight are not given sufficient time and effort in the Clerk's Office.** This would include the formal planning of work, the development of new processes, procedures, or implementation of computer systems to assist in performing work duties.
- **Training of employees is limited mainly to learning about new changes in legislation that impact their work activities.** Enhanced training on computer software and computer systems will be critical to making and implementing changes that will improve the operations of the office.
- **There is a significant and very concerning lack of computer usage in the City Clerk's Office when compared to other communities and best practices.** The limited computer applications that are available have not been embraced by the City Clerk and his staff and have generally not been fully implemented (for example, the in-house system developed by MIS for vital records and the City Code project undertaken by the City Solicitor).
- **The use of computer systems for automating major tasks in the office such as Council Agenda preparation, document archiving, indexing and scanning of documents, and issuance of permits/licenses are normal practices in City Clerk's Offices, but not in Springfield.** These systems are lacking in the City of Springfield leaving staff to rely upon very labor intensive and manual processes and requiring much greater staff effort to handle the workload. In comparable communities that have implemented automated processes, the City Clerk played a strong leadership role in pushing for and overseeing the automation efforts.
- **The City Clerk is not fulfilling its requirement to maintain legal records of public processes,** most notably as that relates to the recording of minutes from City Council meetings and other public boards and commissions.
- **The utilization of the City's website to provide information and services to the citizens of Springfield is far behind that seen in most comparable communities.** City Clerk's Office that are fully utilizing websites to provide services to the public will generally have the following available on their site:
 - A series of frequently asked questions (to educate the public);
 - Access to frequently used forms that can be printed or downloaded by the citizen for completion prior to coming to the office;

- Access to City Council Agenda packets and minutes both meeting of the entire Council and for subcommittee meetings;
- Access to frequently requested City Documents (City Code, Charter, etc.).

Based on the project team's comparative assessment, the City Clerk's Office in Springfield functions significantly below prevailing 'best management practice' levels for municipal clerk's offices as well as below the levels of many other clerk's offices in Massachusetts. These issues have been long-standing, and not the result of recent financial restraints for the City and the Clerk's Office. This conclusion is strongly evident in the Clerk's Office use of technology, internal controls, customer service and management systems.

These significant issues will be evaluated in the next section of the report with recommendations made to improve the services provided.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

The City of Springfield City Clerk's Office provides a wide variety of services ranging from support for the elected body; maintenance and issuance of vital records; handling and processing of various permits, licenses, and registrations; and processing and payments for a variety of local ordinance violation citations. In many ways, the City Clerk's Office functions as the primary contact many citizens have with their local government and the actions of their elected officials. The City of Springfield City Clerk's Office is one that is functioning essentially without benefit of any investments in modern computer technology. The staff relies upon manual processes, ledgers, and typewriters in completing their duties. This approach impacts not only the efficiency of the office but the level of services that can be provided. This chapter provides a summary of the project team's findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding organization, staffing and management.

1. MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WITHIN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE DIRECTION, MEASURE RESULTS, AND GUIDE POLICY CHANGES.

While a high priority is placed on addressing the service needs of the public, no evaluation is occurring regarding the workloads and service commitments needed to address work obligations and walk-in demand. While a high volume of data is collected within the office that would be useful for evaluating service delivery issues and trends, it is unavailable for use to anybody due to being maintained in ledgers, index cards, manually tabulated reports or not at all.

(1) The City Clerk Should Develop a List of Key Performance Indicators That Are Tracked on a Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Basis to Provide a "Scorecard" for Use in Evaluating Key Service Demands.

Existing reports that are manually calculated should be utilized as a template for developing a comprehensive departmental scorecard that addresses major work functions of the office. While extensive data is recorded daily in various ledgers, reports, and tabulations, the ability to compile it and utilize it for management purposes is virtually impossible. A comprehensive computerized spreadsheet should be utilized that combines critical data into a master listing providing on-going totals daily that would replace the multiple manually prepared reports and calculations.

The performance indicators should include data regarding the number of work activities performed in each Division on a daily, weekly and monthly basis as well as the time frames required for completion.

Example indicators would include the following categories:

- Number of vital records (by type) recorded, issued, or changed including;
 - Number of New Births Processed;
 - Number of Birth Certificates Issued;
 - Number of Deaths Recorded;
 - Number of Death Certificates Issued;
 - Number of Marriage Intentions Filed;
 - Number of Marriages Recorded;
 - Number of Marriage Certificates Issued;
 - Number of Affidavits Processed;

- Requests for documents received by mail should be accounted for in a separate line under each appropriate category (birth, death, marriage) so that accurate data is available regarding mail versus counter activity.
- Information regarding the time required to complete tasks such recording new births, death, marriages, and completing mail requests for records should be maintained. This data should be utilized for tracking performance against performance guidelines. For example, the Clerk should adopt a standard of recording all births within one week of receipt. A formal evaluation of performance against this standard can only be accomplished if accurate data is collected regarding time required to complete the duties.
- Number and type of permits issued including:
 - Tag Sales;
 - Fuel Storage;
 - Raffles;
 - Charitable Organization;
 - Casino;
 - Transient Vendor (charitable and non-charitable);
 - Open air parking;
- Certifications and/or registration issued by type including:
 - Physician Registration;
 - Business Certifications.
- Meetings supported including both regular City Council Meetings and Subcommittee Meetings;
- Board of License Commissioners Meetings Supported including data on the:
 - Number of New Licenses Reviewed and Issued;
 - Number of License Transfers;
 - Number of License Changes (transfer, location, corporate structure changes, etc.);

- Number and disposition of Violation Hearings;
- Number of Common Victual with Alcohol Permits Issued;
- Number of Video Game Licenses Issued.

The information outlined above is all currently being compiled manually (with the exception of tracking completion time) but is used essentially only for compilation of the annual report. This data should be combined into one comprehensive electronic spreadsheet that can be reviewed by the City Clerk monthly for trends and changes in workloads. This review should focus on whether changes are necessary in staff allocation (to address service demands) and whether compliance is being achieved with adopted performance goals. These performance goals should include:

- Recording all new birth, death and marriage records within one week of receipt;
- Issuance of all vital record requests (excluding mail requests) the same day requested; and
- Issuance of vital record requests received by mail within one week of receipt.

The final format of the report should be approved by the City Clerk with the actual compilation of the report conducted by the Office Manager and approved by the Assistant City Clerk.

Recommendation: The City Clerk should develop a computerized spreadsheet of key departmental performance indicators that address the major work functions of the office and pull key data from multiple reports into one comprehensive report.

(2) Performance Appraisals Are Not Being Conducted for Employees.

No existing performance appraisal process is currently conducted for staff of the City Clerk's Office. While in Springfield this is not unique to the Clerk's Office, the absence of any formal feedback mechanism in the organization prevents staff from

clearly understanding supervisory expectations, goals and objectives for the coming year, discussing training needs or opportunities for improvement. Frequent feedback to employees is not only critical to ensuring staff development but for identifying issues that impact the delivery of services.

The performance appraisal should be conducted annually and include ratings on the individual's performance on factors such as the following:

Factor	Description
Quality of Work	Work product is complete, accurate, and in an acceptable format. Uses time effectively and work product has a minimal rate of error.
Quantity of Work	Completes assigned work efficiently, and in an organized manner to meet deadlines. Produces a high volume of acceptable work, services and output.
Timeliness	Completes assignments by scheduled time; allocating time to various tasks and assignments in accordance with priorities; informing supervisor when schedule problems occur.
Job Knowledge	Demonstrates comprehension of technical requirements, procedures and practices of the job whether acquired by formal education, training, and/or experience that are used for performing the given key responsibility. This includes handling challenges, and dealing with varying workload requirements.
Time Management, Planning and Organization	Develops strategies and work plans for accomplishing goals; organizes tasks in a logical sequence and identifies resources required. Identifies problems and analyzes causes, taking or recommending actions after evaluating alternative solutions, and following up to ensure problems are actually corrected. It also includes keeping accurate records and documenting actions, processing paperwork, and organizing information for follow-up and retrieval later.
Analytical Thinking, Judgment, and Decision Making	Arrives at sound and timely decisions to perform responsibilities. Realistically weighs and evaluates information, separates important from unimportant, assesses probable consequences and takes appropriate action. Selects decision alternatives that meet the objectives of the Division.
Self-management, Reliability, and Accountability	Consistently and constantly completes assigned projects and tasks to meet or exceed expectations. Displays professionalism in approach to work. Accepts responsibility for all areas of the job. Does not make excuses for errors. Does not blame others for mistakes.
Problem Solving, Initiative, and Creativity	Assumes responsibility for work, is a self-starter, seeks out or willingly accepts tough assignments, anticipates future needs, anticipates problems and voluntarily recommends appropriate actions, as well as discovers and recommends new, relevant and viable concepts, ideas, and improvements to processes. Displays interest in not only maintaining current skills, but also continuously upgrading skills to meet changing requirements of the job.

Additionally, during the evaluation meeting, the supervisor should discuss with the employee the goals and objectives of the City Clerk's Office for the coming year, soliciting input on ways the employee can contribute to the accomplishment of these,

and establish specific goals for the employee that will be a component of the following year's performance evaluation. The supervisor and employee should also discuss and identify training that the employee will attend to maintain and/or increase technical and customer service skills necessary to perform the duties of the position.

The employee evaluations should be conducted by the employee's immediate supervisor and reviewed and approved by the City Clerk prior to discussion with the employee. Evaluations should be conducted at the completion of each Fiscal Year. The City Clerk should work with the Human Resources Director in creating an appropriate form and assessment scales and ensure that each supervisor is properly trained in how to properly assess employee performance.

Recommendation: Performance appraisals should be conducted at least annually with all employees in the City Clerk's Office. The evaluation should address performance during the last rating period, training needs, employee growth opportunities, and invite feedback from the employee regarding potential changes for improving operations.

(3) The Policies and Procedures of the City Clerk's Office Should Be Updated, Provided to All Employees, and Utilized as a Tool for Cross-Training Employees.

The City Clerk's Office has developed a "Job Instructions Manual" which outlines the basic procedures to follow in completing major duties within the office including handling birth, death and marriage records, completing required reports, handling payroll and personnel actions, and providing examples on how to complete specific forms and certificates. In general, this document is a good resource for handling many issues that arise regarding routine activities. Individual employees have annotated sections that they utilize in performing their duties with handwritten notes clarifying the procedures and noting changes in practices since the document was prepared. With

updating, this document could provide a solid resource for an annual training program for Office Personnel, ensuring all staff are kept apprised of changes in procedures, and provide an excellent resource for staff who will be cross trained.

The Assistant Clerk should update the manual by the end of December 2005 to reflect all current practices and work activities and a revised copy provided to all staff. Supplements to this manual should be issued whenever a policy or practice changes that impacts how duties are performed in the City Clerk's Office. These updates will be critical during the implementation of proposed changes since existing practices will be modified significantly. Each employee should be provided and sign for a copy of the supplement. Training sessions should be held whenever the change in practice or policy is of significance to ensure that all staff understand the change and are performing in a consistent manner.

Recommendation: The Assistant City Clerk should update the "Job Instructions Manual" to reflect all current practices and work activities. All employees should be provided and sign for a copy of the manual and updates.

(4) In Conclusion, the Management Systems in City Clerk's Office in Springfield Are Rudimentary or Non-Existent.

The City Clerk's Office operates for the most part without any established management systems in place that would guide operations, provide direction or a roadmap to staff to follow, and identify policy issues to be addressed. This lack of a defined direction and management systems results in the City Clerk's Office being reactive to the daily workloads and demands placed upon them by the public and other departments rather than managing the work.

The majority of processes and procedures that are utilized within the office rely extremely heavily on the use of ledgers, index cards, manual calculations, manual

tabulations and typewriters or not are not recorded at all. These management methods have a significant impact on the Office by consuming extended time for work completion, require duplication of effort, limit the ability to collect and share data necessary for evaluating performance, limit the ability of information to be shared easily with other departments, and require virtually all requests for information to be handled by Clerk's Office Staff. Even in areas where detailed data is collected, the ability to make use of this data is severely hampered due to the format in which it is collected and the fact that it is not on any electronic system.

Recommendation: The City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk should be tasked with developing a management plan for the Office, which addresses service commitments, work and staff processes and technology. Given the lack of information technology skills in the Office managers will need to assistance of other staff in the City to accomplish this (especially from staff in the City's Information Technology and Finance Departments).

2. THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE HAS UNCLEAR ROLES AND RESONSIBILITIES OF KEY SUPERVISORY STAFF AND IMPROPER POSITION ALLOCATION TO HANDLE WORK ACTIVITIES.

The supervisory responsibilities and reporting relationships among some positions within the City Clerk's Office is not clearly defined. Employees in the City Clerk's Office generally reported their immediate supervisor to be the Assistant City Clerk with ultimate direction by the City Clerk. To a lesser extent, some staff identified the Executive Assistant as the primary individual they turned to for guidance in the absence of the Assistant City Clerk. While the formal organizational structure has a Deputy City Clerk as the "backup" supervisor for the front office, this seldom is put into practice and virtually none of the staff identified or utilized this position as a supervisor.

This issue is a function of how management and supervisory staff devote their time to various roles and responsibilities.

(1) The Amount of Time Required for the City Clerk to Perform Departmental Director Functions and Serving as the Technical Expert for Office Staff Leaves Insufficient Time for Him to Focus on Planning and Policy Issues.

The operations of the City Clerk's Office are heavily reliant on the knowledge and historical information possessed by the City Clerk. While this serves the organization well in some regards – it also creates vulnerability in that in the absence of this individual the performance of the Office in general is impacted negatively. This problem is only exacerbated by the manual systems that are utilized in the office that limit accessibility to certain records without personal knowledge. For example, in matters taken before the City Council, the lack of a comprehensive index for all items considered by the City Council and the existing method of filing of Council Actions by Meeting Date in individual folders makes it difficult for documents to be located quickly. A significant portion of the Clerk's time, as a result, is consumed responding to inquiries and answering technical questions, which limits his ability to move beyond the details and into the planning mode.

The City Clerk should be the primary person responsible for undertaking the planning function for the office and developing the mission, goals and objectives, and performance measures for each of the areas assigned to his oversight. The current oversight provided to the staff in the Board of License Commissioners and the City Council Offices is mainly of an administrative nature (approving time off request and payroll, providing staff to assist in covering these offices as needed, responding to

questions regarding actions taken by the Council) rather than in planning the direction and work processes of these Offices.

The Assistant City Clerk should be responsible for overseeing, addressing, and answering questions related to the technical aspects of the City Clerks Office. The Assistant City Clerk should also be responsible for the daily supervision and evaluation of staff assigned to this area. Additionally, she should be responsible for developing the statistical and monitoring reports that will enable data to be available for use in measuring performance and identifying peak service trends and periods and for the implementation of the performance standards and goals developed by the City Clerk.

The Deputy City Clerk position has developed over time to be a back-up supervisor for the front office in the absence of the City Clerk and the Assistant City Clerk and a third individual authorized to sign documents on behalf of the City Clerk. In practice, the position seldom assumes a supervisory role and has principally performed duties related to the ordering of supplies, copying of forms, retrieval of records located in remote storage locations throughout City Hall, and assisting in the Front Office as needed. The position is severely underutilized and lacks a focused set of duties.

The Executive Assistant position in the Clerk's Office currently performs a mixture of task specific duties (ordinance violation payments, physician registrations, records mobile homes, and assistance on front counter) and general office support duties (cash reconciliation, oversees opening/closing of front office daily, deposits funds with financial institution, serving as lead worker in absence of Assistant City Clerk). In practice, this position is not viewed by other staff as a direct supervisor nor is she assigned to perform the key duties of a lead position (planning, assigning, and

reviewing work) on a regular basis. The position is currently being underutilized and should have additional responsibilities added including purchasing, budget and payroll administration, staff training and overseeing data collection to assume a more focused and integral role in the daily office operations. Based on other recommendations contained within this report regarding Ordinance Violations, sufficient time will be freed up for her to devote to these additional duties.

A review of the comparable communities surveyed show that most organizations are functioning with two primary management personnel – a City Clerk and an Assistant or Deputy City Clerk. In only three cases – namely Lowell (Operations Manager), Cambridge (Operations Manager), and Worcester (second Assistant City Clerk) – is there is a third management/supervisory position. The recommended changes regarding the positions of Deputy Assistant Clerk and Executive Assistant will bring the organizational structure of the Springfield City Clerk's Office in line with that found in comparable communities.

Recommendation: The City Clerk should focus greater time and effort on planning the Department's future, developing performance goals, objectives and measures, and implementing updated methods and practices.

Recommendation: The Assistant City Clerk position should be expanded to assume greater responsibilities for the daily oversight, evaluation, and technical support for the City Clerk's Office. This position should assist in the development of reporting capabilities that track key performance indicators.

Recommendation: The Position of Deputy City Clerk should be eliminated and replaced with a Work Reception Clerk to realign staff with service demand.

Recommendation: The Position of Executive Assistant should be replaced with the Position of Office Manager to include formal responsibility for daily supervision of other staff assigned to City Clerk's Office and associated duties of the Office.

(2) The Positions of Procedures Clerk and Vital Records Clerk Should Be Reorganized into One Classification titled Principal Clerk.

The current organizational structure of the Clerk's Office is based on a very narrow assignment of duties for the positions of Vital Records Clerk and Procedures Clerks. Work is assigned primarily on functional areas (e.g., births, deaths, marriages, affidavits) rather than on the level of responsibility and knowledge required which is similar in each of those areas. This results in an uneven distribution of workload, highly segmented work functions, and backlogs in specific areas due to absences. While some cross training exists, employees typically perform other individual's duties only when they are absent for an extended period of time. Cross training should be greatly expanded so that all Principal Clerks are able to perform all office duties related to the processing, recording, changing, and issuance of birth, death, and marriage records.

A review of the organizational structure utilized in other communities supports this. Discussions with City Clerks in other communities reveal that their personnel are generally cross-trained and utilized in a broader manner than currently exists in the City of Springfield. The following table shows the classifications utilized to staff the "front counter" operations:

Community	Positions Utilized in Front Office
Springfield	Executive Assistant Procedures Clerks Vitals Clerk Work Reception Clerk
Worcester	Head Clerk Principal Clerk Senior Clerk
Lowell	Head Clerks
Lynn	Head Clerks
New Bedford	Principal Clerks Clerk Typists
Quincy	Principal Clerk Senior Clerk Clerk Typist

The position consolidation and enhanced cross-training will greatly increase the ability to focus resources during periods of peak demand for specific services, and with the implementation of performance standards, provide greater flexibility in the ability of the office to meet those standards. Additionally, with other recommendation contained later in this report, the implementation of computer systems should reduce the manual processes currently being performed that consume significant amounts of time for these individuals. The current segmentation of duties was appropriate with the current processes that are in place. However, computerization, increased training, and cross-training will eliminate the need to have one individual responsible for such a narrow functional area.

Recommendation: Reclassify the Vitals Clerk and Procedures Clerk into Principal Clerk classification responsible for full range of duties associated with the processing, entering, and modification of vital records.

Recommendation: Institute cross training program to ensure all individuals in the new classification have the technical knowledge to perform the assigned duties.

(3) Adjustments in How the Front Counter Is Staffed and the Method of Providing Services Would Improve the Timeliness and Services Provided to the Public.

While data is not readily available to document the number of citizen contacts made at the front counter on a daily basis, it is apparent from review of several indicators (project team observation in the office, amount of time additional staff assigned to spend on counter, and the comparison to other comparable communities) that the number of individuals assigned to the front counter is insufficient to handle demand. Currently, the Procedures Clerks, Vital Clerk, and the City Council Clerks (a total of seven additional individuals) supplement the two Work Reception Clerks on an

as needed basis. These positions are assigned to assist on the front counter by either the Assistant City Clerk or the City Clerk.

Individuals in these positions estimated spending anywhere from 25% to 50% of their work time assisting with front counter duties. This includes time during the hours the office is open to the public as well as the assistance provided first thing in the morning in typing up vital records ordered the previous day. Estimating this on a FTE equivalent basis, the time spent by other staff approximates two additional staff members. The time spent by these staff on the front counter is inefficient since it is typically accomplished as a reactive measure (based upon citizen demand for services) and results in the individuals being pulled away from their primary assigned duties. With the additional staff provided to serve the front counter, those individuals in the classification of Principal Clerk will be able to and should devote full attention to their primary assigned duties and should be required to assist on the front counter only on an extremely limited basis.

In conjunction with the addition of additional front counter staff, the City Clerk's Office should adopt revised performance standards for the provision of all vital records including providing copies of all vital records requested over the counter immediately to the citizen. This standard is currently utilized by most other communities that were surveyed. A secondary benefit that will be achieved with this change in procedure is the elimination of the need to deal with citizens twice – once when they request the record and the second time when they return (usually the next day) to pick up the record.

Recommendation: The number of Principal Work Clerks should be reduced by one and the number of Work Reception Clerks increased by one.

(4) Staffing Levels of the Board of License Commissioners Should Be Modified and the Responsibility for this Function Should Be Transferred to the Deputy Collector's Office.

The license clerk assigned to support the Board of License Commissioners was previously assigned to the City Clerk's front office and in addition to handling her present duties, assisted with the issuance of other permits and Clerk's activities. She was recently transferred and relocated to a separate office on another floor of City Hall. It does not appear based upon a review of the work outcomes from this office, that this position warrants a full-time position. The primary work duties, processing of liquor licenses and issuance of licenses and permits (video game, common victualer's, and innkeeper/lodging house), are seasonal activities that generate large volumes of activities during the renewal/application period but virtually little activity the remainder of the year. This position supports monthly meetings and hearings of the Board primarily as they relate to the handling of liquor license violations. A more effective utilization of this position would be to include additional or similar duties that generate more consistent year round work levels or a reduction in the position to part-time.

Additionally, this position more appropriately should be located in a different Department. While the City Clerk's daily involvement in the functions of this office are limited, transferring this Office to another location would enable his time to be spent on the core duties of his Office. Several of the comparable communities have removed the oversight of the License Control Board from the City Clerk's Office. These communities include Cambridge, Lowell, New Bedford, and Worcester. Given the close working interaction with the Legal Department on the processing of liquor licenses, supervision of this Office could be transferred to the City Solicitor. Alternatively, given that the

Deputy Collector also serves as the Chairman of the Board of the License Commissioners, it would be appropriate that this individual have a role in the supervision of the staff assigned to the Board of License Commissioners.

It is the project teams recommendation that the position of License Clerk supporting the Board of License Commissioners be organizationally relocated under the Deputy Collector for supervision purposes. This move will also eliminate previous problems that have arisen where directions given by the Chairman were not followed due to a lack of a formal supervisory relationship. Following the reorganization, the Deputy Collector should carefully monitor the work loads associated with this position and make a determination within six months regarding whether sufficient duties are available to warrant the continuation of this position as full time.

Recommendation: Responsibility for overseeing the Board of License Commissioners should be transferred to the Deputy Collector.

Recommendation: The position of License Clerk supporting the Board of License Commissioners should be reevaluated six months following transfer to determine if the duties continue to warrant a full-time position or if additional duties can be added to maintain the full-time nature of the position.

3. CERTAIN SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE NEED TO BE ENHANCED WHILE OTHERS SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED.

The review of services provided by the City Clerk's Office has identified four specific areas where existing practices should be changed to either enhance the services provided by the City Clerk's Office or remove a function that is better performed elsewhere. These changes will provide a greater focus on the core duties of the City Clerk's Office.

(1) Minutes Should Be Prepared and Distributed for All Meetings of the City Council.

Currently the City of Springfield provides no minutes of Council Meetings and/or Council Subcommittee Meetings. The City Clerk's Office does record the Action taken on all items and the information is available by contacting the Office. The City Council Office is responsible for staffing and recording action of all City Council Subcommittee meetings. While notes are taken regarding what transpires at these meetings, again, no document is prepared (unless requested by an interested party) of the actions taken by the City Council.

While the existing practice appears to comply with a narrow interpretation of the General Laws of Massachusetts regarding the maintenance of records of meetings of boards and commissions, these practices do not serve well either the City Council or the public. Best practices dictate that, at a minimum, action minutes should be prepared and distributed that detail the disposition and vote taken on each item of business that goes before the City Council. These minutes should be prepared and presented to the Board for adoption at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The communities surveyed as part of this study all prepare Council Minutes that document the action taken. The preparation and distribution of minutes will ensure that all interested and affected parties have the ability to track the activities of the City Council without having to make direct contact with a member of the City Clerk's Office to find out the disposition of items.

Action minutes should be prepared within two business days following a meeting by the City Council Clerk based upon the notes currently taken by the City Clerk (or his designee) during the meeting. For the immediate term, these can be prepared by

adding a line following each Council Agenda item that indicates the disposition of the item (adopted, denied, deferred, etc.) and the vote (if one was taken). Ultimately, these will be able to be developed utilizing the software recommended later in this report. For Council Subcommittee Meetings, the Administrative Aide staffing the meeting should prepare the minutes. Similar to the recommendation above regarding City Council meetings, these minutes should be prepared within two business days following the meeting.

The action minutes should be distributed to all departments within one week of the meeting for their information. Action minutes should require less than an hour per meeting to prepare especially if the agenda preparation is conducted electronically so that descriptions of each item do not have to be retyped.

Longer term, the goal of the City Clerk's Office should be to prepare more detailed 'sense minutes.

Recommendation: Action minutes should be produced and distributed within one week of each regular City Council meeting and each City Council Subcommittee meeting.

(2) The City Code Should Be Updated and Codified to Provide Electronic Access and Search Functions.

The current city code is maintained in loose-leaf format by attaching copies of the revised ordinances to the previous version. A rudimentary index to changes is maintained in a document format showing the ordinance number, topic, and date of last revision. One of the most basic services that can be provided for the citizens of a community is a clear understanding of the laws enacted by the local elected officials and the existing code is seriously lacking in providing this information in an easy to

access and utilize format. Additionally, staff efforts can be hampered due to not having at hand the most current ordinances enacted by the City Council.

The City Solicitor has undertaken, using his own staff, an initiative to update and distribute the Code in a Microsoft Word file that will enable easier updating and the ability to search for specific terms. This effort has been hampered by the inability of the City Clerk's Staff to devote time to reviewing the draft document that has been prepared. The involvement of the City Clerk's Office, as the keeper of the official actions of the City Council, is critical to ensuring that this effort succeeds. While this effort will make strides in improving the usability and ability to update the City Code over the present form, it still falls short of the standard that should be expected in a community of this size. Additionally, it will require a significant investment of future staff time to update and maintain the system.

Best practices indicate that the City of Springfield should outsource this function to one of the national codification services to recodify the city code and produce periodic updates. Using one of these services will also enable the City to place the City Code in electronic format on their website so that all City Staff and the public may access it.

Comparable communities that have an up-to-date City Code have generally utilized one of the national firms that specialize in this service. While one community has developed an in-house system, this is not practical for the City of Springfield given the time, resources that it would required, and the costs associated with in-house software development. Typical costs for a complete recodification of the City Code alone are generally around \$15,000 for communities similar in size and function to the City of Springfield. Annual maintenance costs are generally around \$5,000. Since

selection of a vendor will require the issuance of a formal RFP, this effort should be undertaken immediately.

Given the current status of the City Code and the City Council minutes, this Codification project should be directly overseen by the City Clerk with assistance from his staff (especially the City Council Clerk). It will also require involvement from the City Solicitor's Office during implementation.

Recommendation: The City Clerk should utilize one of the national code services for the codification and updating of the City Code. The initial cost of this is approximately \$15,000 with an annual maintenance cost of about \$5,000. Following recodification, the City Code should be placed on the City's website for staff and citizen access.

(3) The Processing of Non-Criminal Ordinance Violations by the City Clerk's Office Staff Should be Significantly Reduced and Eliminated if Possible.

The City Clerk's Office has the responsibility for the entering a variety of Non-Criminal Ordinance Violations into the mainframe computer system and for the acceptance and payments related to these ordinance violations. Subject areas covered include tickets issued by Code Enforcement, Animal Control, Public Works (Waste Collection), Parking, and Park District for ordinance violations. In practice, the entry of these violations is a relatively low priority work task within the Office and are entered when time permits or an individual comes in to pay a ticket.

This function is not one that is universally provided by City Clerk's Offices and where it is provided, it is not provided in as extensive a manner as is occurring in the City of Springfield. The individual departments that are issuing the tickets should handle entry for these ordinance violations. Access to the same mainframe system can be provided for those Departments not currently having access to it.

Ultimately, payments made against all ordinance violations should be handled at one central location – namely the City Tax Collector's Office. Whenever possible, the receipt of funds in individual Departments should be limited and a centralized payment center utilized. This increases fund security, accounting, and timely deposits into the City Treasury.

If all departments assume responsibility for the entry of their own tickets into the existing mainframe system, there do not appear to be any impediments to the collection of all payments on these violations by the City Collector's Office. This recommendation should be implemented as soon as possible with a target date of no later than January 1, 2006. The time freed up for the Executive Assistant, who is currently handling these duties, will be used for increasing her responsibility for supervision of the front office and for implementing other recommendations in this report.

The City of Springfield should also take any and all necessary actions to enact practices that would enable them to utilize "municipal charges liens" (similar to those outlined in Chapter 40 Section 58 of the Massachusetts General Laws). These liens are commonly utilized throughout the country to address situations where individuals fail to pay charges or fees due and the costs of recording and/or discharging the liens are also borne by the property owner. In essence, this type of practice allows a municipality to place a lien against real property owned by individuals who have unpaid fees and charges outstanding. In order to make the most efficient use of this process, reasonable guidelines should be established such that only those individuals owing funds in excess of a threshold amount – for example \$250.

Recommendation: The responsibility for the entry of ordinance violations and the collection of ordinance violation payments should be relocated from the City

Clerk's Office. Violation entry should occur within the individual departments issuing tickets and payments should be made to the City Collector.

Recommendation: The City of Springfield should pursue the adoption of policies, procedures, and/or ordinances that would authorize the utilization of municipal charges liens to collect unpaid fines, fees, and charges.

(4) The Registration of Dogs Should Be Enhanced Through the Utilization of the Records Provided to the City Clerk's Office Regarding Rabies Vaccinations Administered by Local Veterinarians and Data Compiled During Local Census.

The City Clerk's Office receives data from local veterinarians regarding all dogs vaccinated for rabies. Additionally, data is available from the local census documenting the ownership of dogs within the City of Springfield. Staff believes that the level of voluntary compliance with their dog registration ordinance is low and reported an increase following the inclusion of questions on the City census regarding dog ownership. The City Clerk's Staff should utilize the data received from veterinarian's offices and the local census to increase compliance with registration requirements. At the present time, no use is made of this information. Unless this information is put to use, there is little value in collecting it.

Staff should check records received from vaccination records to determine if the dog is currently licensed. If not, a form letter should be sent to the owner outlining the licensing requirement, providing the necessary form, and outlining the penalty for failure to register. The project team would suggest that the City of Springfield consider increasing the fee for failure to register a dog if the registration does not occur within twenty-one days following mailing of the letter. A copy of this letter should be sent to the Animal Control Office for future follow-up. In the same manner, information gathered from the local census can be utilized to verify compliance with the licensing

requirements. While there will be an increased cost for mailing additional letters to the owners of dogs within the City of Springfield, the additional costs should be more than offset by the additional registration fees that are received.

Recommendation: Upon receipt of rabies registration documentation, the City Clerk's Staff should determine through a review of the dog-licensing file if the dog is currently registered. If not, a letter should be sent notifying the owner of the need to register and indicating the amount. Notification of dogs identified as "unregistered" should also be provided to animal control for follow-up with the homeowner for potential ticketing for failure to comply with registration requirements.

4. INVESTMENTS IN COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES ARE NECESSARY TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY WITHIN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE.

The lack of computer access and availability to the City Clerk's Staff is one of the single largest issues causing service delays, process improvements, and improved collection of workload data. The deficiency is present in both the utilization of personal computers and the availability of specialized computer software.

(1) The Number of Personal Computers in the City Clerk's Office Needs to Be Increased for Identified Service Improvements to Occur.

The use of personal computers within the City Clerk's Office is extremely limited. Staff of the License Commission and the City Council office all have personal computers available for their use and appear to utilize them extensively in the performance of their duties. However, the use of personal computers in the main City Clerk's Office is limited due to and the lack of computers within the office and the lack of training that has been provided to staff. The two positions assigned to handling agenda preparation and licensing activities routinely utilize personal computers. However, all staff assigned to the front office area must share a computer and utilize it primarily for printing some permits and typing letters.

Additional personal computers should be acquired to provide ready access for all staff members in the Classification of Principal Clerk and above. Three computers in addition to the ones already present should be sufficient to enable all staff to begin automating their processes and tracking workloads via Excel. This will also provide sufficient machines to prevent employees from waiting for access to complete duties – which currently exist. Ideally, two of these computers would be located at the front counter and have access not only to the standard PC software programs but also to the specialized program that was developed for the City Clerk's Office by I.T. to handle vital records.

The personal computers acquired should be capable of handling the software systems proposed in the following recommendations so that full integration within the office can occur. The cost per computer should be around \$1,500 each, including hardware and software. The total cost, therefore, would be \$4,500.

In order for these computers to be effectively utilized, the City Clerk should arrange for himself and all staff to have training on the software programs that will be utilized. This training should occur in the weeks or month prior to the installation of the computers so that the employees are able to effectively utilize the computers once installed.

Recommendation: The City Clerk should acquire three personal computers for primary use by the Principal Clerks at a cost of \$4,500.

(2) The City Clerk Needs to Implement an Automated Council Agenda, Minute, and Document Archiving Software Package to Enable the Automation of Records and Reduce Preparation Time.

The most critical functions of a City Clerk's Office include City Council support and providing public access to the records and actions of their elected officials. Given

the current processes in place, the support and information provided to the City Council and the public is seriously lacking in this area when compared to other comparable communities in Massachusetts. The public has no easy access to agenda packets to determine items that will be considered by their elected officials without physically contacting the City Clerk's Office. Additionally, since no minutes are currently being prepared or distributed, the public has limited ability to follow, after the fact, the actions of their government.

The agenda for the City Council should be prepared utilizing an electronic agenda software package. While the agenda is currently prepared in a timely fashion, the ability to share the agenda packet electronically or search prior council actions is unavailable. In addition to streamlining the preparation process, the use of electronic agenda preparation software allows the entire Council packet to be stored, transmitted, and the searched electronically. It will enable departments providing documents to the City Clerk often to do so in electronic format further reducing the workload placed upon staff in preparing the agenda packet. This software will also provide the foundation for the electronic archival of Council records and development of a searchable index of all items presented to the City Council which will lead to greater time savings for the City Clerk's Staff and improved levels of service to the City Council and the public. Finally, software of this type provide the ability to create minutes of Council Meetings easily following the completion of the meeting by entering the motion made, the votes cast, and the final action taken. It integrates with the items entered during the creation of the agenda packet to limit duplication of effort and reduce staff time commitments.

The system acquired should be one that has available, either as an integrated function or as an upgrade, the ability to add other documents into the storage system and index. For example, the City Clerk's Office is responsible for the filing and indexing of all City Contracts. However, these documents are routinely not filed for extended periods of time (in some cases approaching a year), and no ready index for staff is available. This level of service is unacceptable. As the archivist of official city documents, the Clerk's Office should be providing much greater and easier access to the documents they possess. Following implementation of the agenda and minute components of the software, priority should be given to establishment of an index and electronic file system for City Contracts. Finally, the selected system should be able to easily integrate with the City of Springfield's web site in order to post both agendas and minutes to the website.

There are several major software packages that handle the majority of business in this area. They all have essentially the same availability of features but differ in how they operate and the extent to which they can integrate with other systems. While costs vary depending upon the specific features acquired and the number of concurrent users that are authorized, the City of Springfield should be able to acquire a complete software system including any associated hardware that covers all of the functions listed above for approximately \$35,000 to \$40,000.

Recommendation: The City Clerk should acquire an automated software package to handle the preparation, archiving, and indexing of Council Agendas, minutes, and reports. The software selected should provide the capability of expanding to handle a comprehensive document scanning, archival and indexing program. The cost of this system would be between \$35,000 – \$40,000.

(3) The Permitting System That the City of Springfield Is Currently Acquiring Should Be Integrated into the City Clerk's Office.

The City Clerk's Office is currently responsible for issuing and processing a significant number of permits, licenses, and registrations. Each of these is handled through manual processes and actual permits and licenses are either typed or printed from Word documents. The new permitting system acquired by the City should be utilized for handling all permits and licenses within the City Clerk's Office. This system will replace a litany of index card files and paper records that currently are maintained.

Utilization of the computer software will also enable the sharing of data between departments based upon common names, business names, and/or property address. A history of permitting and licensing activities will be present that will enable the staff to increase efforts in proactively determining if individuals are in compliance with licensing and permitting requirements.

All employees in the City Clerk's Office who handle front counter duties, should be trained on the new permitting software once purchased. Following the training, they should be required to utilize this system for handling all permitting activities.

Recommendation: The City Clerk's Office Should be Involved in the Selection, Implementation and Training on the New Permitting System Being Acquired. After acquisition, all licenses and permits issued by the City Clerk's Office should be handled through this system following employees receiving the appropriate training.

(4) The In-House Program Developed for Handling Vital Records Not Covered by the Mass Laser Program Needs to Be Utilized.

The provision of vital records in the City of Springfield varies depending upon the date of the record requested. Most recent records of births (after 1987) are available electronically through the State Vital Records system that the City Clerk's Office has

implemented and is utilizing proficiently. If the requested record is available on that system, it can be printed immediately and provided to the customer. All other birth records and all death and marriage records, must be handled by hand. The City Clerk's Staff must pull the original document, photocopy it and affix the official seal (for certain records) or type the document onto the required form. In the latter case, the time to prepare a document is much greater especially when multiple copies of the record are requested.

The I.T. staff of the City of Springfield expended significant time and effort over the last several years to develop an in-house computer software program to assist the City Clerk's Office in handling those vital records that are not currently covered by the State system. The system developed enables the Clerk's Staff to enter the data required for the requested record into the computer system, print as many copies as necessary, and store the information in a database for future use. This system is not being utilized within the Clerk's Office. This system is more efficient not only because typing errors can be corrected prior to printing the document, but the information on the record is stored in a database should additional copies be needed in the future.

The City Clerk and his staff should immediately review this program with I.T. staff to determine if any further modifications are necessary prior to utilization. I.T. Staff are not aware of any additional modifications that are necessary in order to implement this software immediately and are willing to make any final modifications necessary. Immediate efforts should be undertaken to train all City Clerk's staff on this system and move away from utilizing typewriters to prepare requested vital records. While ideally, a proactive approach would be taken to enter vital records into the system as time

permitted, even if it is only utilized as documents are requested, over time the database will begin to be populated.

This system has also been designed to allow payments for vital records to be recorded in the system. This provides the ability for daily revenue reports to be printed showing the funds received for records handled on this system. While this will not include all vital records issued during the day, it will reduce significantly the hand tallying that is occurring in order to reconcile accounts at the end of the day. This system also has reporting capabilities that enable detailed reports to be printed regarding the number of records, by type, that are issued over designated time periods (for example – daily, weekly, monthly, yearly).

Springfield's approach to handling older vital records is similar to their comparable communities in the respect that the development of an in-house computer system is the best method of achieving a program that will fully meet their needs. The only difference is that in other communities that have developed an in-house system, it is being more aggressively utilized and City Clerk's Staff and I.T. staff work closely together to adjust the system to meet the operational needs on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation: The City Clerk and I.T. Department should review the existing system, train all staff on its use, and begin utilization immediately. The City Clerk and I.T. Staff should meet monthly to discuss future modifications or changes that would improve the functionality of the system for at least the next six months of implementation.

(5) The City Clerk Should Utilize Cash Registers at the Front Counter and Make Daily Deposits to the City Treasurer to Increase Accountability for the Handling of Cash.

At the present time, all cash received in the City Clerk's Office is accounted for through the use of manual systems. Receipts are issued only upon request – or where

necessary to prove payment. The Clerk's Staff documents each payment received in a ledger for the applicable item (birth, death, or marriage license, permit or license, etc.). This results in the maintenance and daily reconciliation of a large number of documents. The utilization of either a cash payment software system or simply the utilization of cash registers (that enable the itemization of payments processed by individual employee) would increase the ability to audit transactions and simplify the reconciliation process. . The cash registers installed should be capable of integrating with cash management software in case the City of Springfield would move in this direction in the future.

The City Clerk's Office reconciles cash daily and makes deposits into the financial institution designated by the City Treasurer. During the term of this study, the City Treasurer has changed procedures so that all deposits are made into the City's General Account rather than into separate accounts for the City Clerk's Office. The Clerk's staff provides documentation regarding the deposits to the City Treasurer and reconciles back statements monthly.

The City Treasurer's recent policy change should be expanded to also require that all funds received are deposited daily directly with the City Treasurer's Office. All comparable communities and best practices dictate that funds should be deposited daily with the City Treasurer's Office rather than directly into a bank account.

The purchase and installation of cash registers to assist in tracking and auditing cash payments in the City Clerk's Office can be accomplished for approximately \$3,000 and will increase the security and tracking of funds and payments that flow through the City Clerk's Office.

Recommendation: The City Clerk should acquire and require staff to utilize cash registers that enable each payment to be tracked by type and cashier ID at a cost of \$3,000.

Recommendation: The City Treasurer should institute cash handling policies for all Departments that require funds to be deposited with his office on a daily basis rather than directly to financial institutions.

(6) The City Clerk Should Utilize the City's Website to Provide Information and Applications to the Public.

Currently the City Clerk's website provides a general overview of the office and the functions it performs. In addition to the services previously identified to be provided on the website (City Code, Council Agenda, Council Minutes), the City Clerk should utilize his website to (1) educate the public about specific regulations and licensing requirements; and (2) to provide copies of actual forms. Both of these actions should decrease the telephone and counter traffic for individuals needing only basic information or needing a form to complete. The best way to determine the information that would be useful to post on the website is to review the types of telephone questions that are received in the City Clerk's Office. This will provide a good indication of which documents and information would benefit the public if posted on the website.

Forms for all requesting vital records and applying for all permits and licenses should be placed on-line. These can easily be placed on-line through simply scanning and posting or the more preferable method is the development of the form in Adobe .pdf format that would enable the user to enter information directly onto the form and print it out. Adobe software that enables users to create fillable forms in .pdf format is available for approximately \$500. Two copies of this software should be sufficient to meet the needs of the City Clerk's Office.

The responsibility for upgrading the website for the City Clerk's Office and the development of forms for posting in the website should be conducted by the Assistant City Clerk and the Office Manager.

Recommendation: The City Clerk's Office should Utilize the Website to Provide Technical Information Regarding Services Provides and City Regulations; as well as, providing common forms in a downloadable format.

5. MINOR MODIFICATIONS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE.

The City Clerk's Office has available sufficient space for all functions that need to be performed. While space is in many cases poorly utilized or underutilized, the activities of the office are not impacted in any appreciable manner due to overcrowding. However, the physical condition of the office space, the filing methods utilized, and the location of files can be improved.

(1) The Office Environment of the Clerk's Office Is Not Conducive to the Performance of Work Activities.

The City Clerk's Office is one that, by the nature of its duties, handles a considerable amount of paper. However, in the front office area these are boxed, stacked, and piled on every available flat surface. While staff is generally able to find documents, the workflow and appearance of the office is impacted. A concerted effort should be made to remove all unnecessary documents from the front office area. Documents waiting to be filed or processed should be stored in either one of the safes located in the room or one of the adjacent back rooms.

The office furniture provided in the City Clerk's Office while reasonably functional does not contribute to an efficient or modern workspace. Most furniture is "army style" metal desks, cabinets and filing systems. The City Clerk should develop a plan to

update the office with new workstations (more suitable to handling computer systems) with one of the local Office Supply Stores. Most office supply stores are capable of also providing advice on office layout that make effective use of available space and recommend furniture to fit the office. These services are typically provided at not cost. The City Clerk should use this plan to request capital funding during the next budget cycle to update the office area. Any items purchased will need to be procured through the City's normal purchasing process including competitive bidding.

Recommendation: Eliminate unneeded files from front office area and redesign office layout including a budget request for new workstations.

(2) Storage of Materials in Safes Need to Be Addressed.

The City Clerk has acquired over the years, the use of a variety of safes located throughout the City Hall Facility. In general, these provide sufficient and appropriate storage to protect the documents of the City. The only caution to be noted is that all records are stored on site. Due to the lack of archiving, there are no duplicates or electronic records stored off-site.

The City Clerk recently acquired the use of an additional safe on the third floor of City Hall. At the present time, this is not being utilized due to a lack of shelving appropriate for records. It is the project teams understanding that these are in the process of being acquired, and therefore no recommendation is made other than once installed, the Clerk should utilize this additional space in a manner that enables some documents currently stored in the front office area to be removed.

The final comment regarding storage of documents relates to the safe maintained in the basement off the employee break room. This safe contains a significant number of boxes of documents that are stored on the floor – often in broken

boxes. Books, documents, and papers are in many cases overflowing only the floor, which is littered with trash, debris, and cigarette butts. This area was recently wired with a new smoke alarm system and it was reported that in making repairs they moved boxes with little regard to contents, utilized boxes for stepping and standing, causing much of the disarray currently present. Even assuming this is the case; the storage of many documents located in this area is done in a manner unsuitable for the long-term care and maintenance of city records.

Recommendation: The condition of the basement safe, and the documents stored within it, should be addressed immediately with a concerted effort at cleaning, reboxing, and organizing the documents stored in this space.

(3) Office Hours for Public Service Are from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and Should Be Expanded.

In response to staff reductions, the office hours have been reduced in the City Clerk's Office so that public services are provided during the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, with evening service provided on Thursdays until 6:00 p.m. This was designed to provide the reduced staff time to handle administrative functions without distraction or the need to staff the front counter. The 45 minutes in the morning between the time staff arrive and the office opens is primarily spent getting cash drawers set up for the day, typing vital records requested the previous day, and handling other administrative duties. The 30 minutes at the end of the day is time spent balancing cash and the associated paperwork supporting the cash transactions and handling requests for vital records requested. Additionally, it provides a quiet time for staff to focus undisturbed on routine duties.

In all cases, except one, comparable communities are providing services during the entire time period that their office is staffed. Additionally, only two of the comparable

communities provide for evening hours for the public. In general, the provision of evening office hours for the public is a positive move by an Office of this type and provides service to certain citizens who are unable to handle their business during normal working hours. The project team would note that three of the comparable communities that do not currently provide evening hours indicated that they previously provided this service but discontinued it due to lack of demand. No records are currently kept by the City Clerk would enable an analysis of the effectiveness and demand for evening services. City Clerk staff should be documenting the type and number of public encounters on Thursday evening to determine whether the level of service demanded during the evening hours should continue and whether they are appropriately staffed.

While reduced operating hours for the public is one seemingly logical approach to handling previous reductions in staffing, the project team does not believe that it is the best approach for managing workloads or demands since it simply compacts the total services demanded into a shorter time period. Therefore, many of the recommendations in this report are designed to simplify and/or reduce the effort that will be required of the staff in order to provide services.

Recommendation: Office Hours for the Public Should be Adjusted in the short term to 8:30 to 4:15 to increase hours available to serve the public. In the longer term, office hours available for public service should increase to match the normal operating hours of the office. These hours should be extended following implementation of new systems and position restructuring recommended.

Recommendation: Staff should begin tracking all services provided during the Thursday evening hours so that an analysis can be conducted to determine whether this service is best meeting the needs of the citizens.